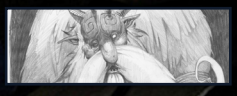
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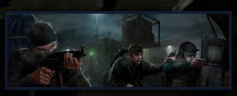
2d Artist

Nicolas Oroc

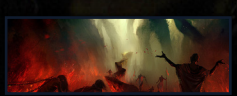
From Prince of Persia Warrior Within to Splinter Cell 5, read our in-depth interview with Illustrator/Concept Artist for A2M, Nicolas Oroc!!



ARTICLES
Sketchbook of Bjorn Hurri



INTERVIEWS
Nick Oroc, Dave Neale & Andie Tong



GALLERIES
Tim Warnock, Nick Percival & Frederic St-Arnaud, plus more!



MAKING OF'S
'Human Touch' by Eric Wilkerson



TUTORIALS
Our brand new Matte Painting Series by Tiberius Viris, plus more!



EDITORIAL

Hello all and all hello. Welcome to **ISSUE 026!** First things first, let me introduce our brand spanking new tutorial series on Matte Painting! **[PAGE 111]** The talents of Tiberius Viris tackle this new five-parter, so get stuck in right now and stay with us for the next four issues to get your fill of Matte Painting tips and tricks! To put your new-found Matte Painting skills to the challenge, why not mosey on over to the Threedy.com forums where you'll find Tiberius in our regular Matte Painting Challenges?! Our interviewees this month include the inspirational Nick Oroc, who our resident artist, Richard Tilbury, had the pleasure of meeting at ADAPT 2007, so be sure to check out his amazing work on **PAGE 008**. Our second interview is with the lovely Dave Neale, one of our Stylised Challenge regulars. We love his style, so we thought it was about time we got to know him a little better! **[PAGE 019]** Our other interview is with an amazing comic book artist who we had the pleasure of meeting and chatting to at this year's Birmingham International Comics Show (where we had a stall – woo!). So for a huge dose of comic art medicine, see **PAGE 027** and get those pencils and Wacoms twitching! One of my favourites this month is the wonderful sketchbook of Bjorn Hurri **[PAGE 043]**. You may have seen Bjorn's work gracing the ConceptArt forums, where he has a developed a huge following; he sent us so much work we could have filled an entire magazine – trust me when I say that Bjorn has talents that many of us would die for! We've also welcomed Bente Schlick to 2DArtist this month; turn to **PAGE 089** for a lesson on how to paint a beautiful Misty Morning landscape. We can look forward to more beauty from Bente over the coming months, so stay tuned! Finally, Eric Wilkerson's Making Of takes on a traditional approach to digital painting this month, which I think many artists will find really inspiring, so take a look and get the motivation you need! We love a bit of what's good for us, and this magazine is certainly all that, so get stuck in and enjoy this month's offerings! Ed.

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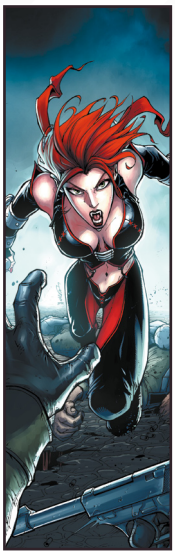
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To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2DArtist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

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2. Go to the VIEW menu, then PAGE DISPLAY;
3. Select TWO-UP CONTINUOUS, making sure that SHOW COVER PAGE is also selected.

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Every month, many creatives and artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines. And here you can read all about them! If you would also like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist magazine, please contact lynette@zoopublishing.com.



Andie Tong



occasionally travels to exotic locations across the Universe combating aliens and saving the world from ruthless galactic conquerors. On his time off, he enjoys going to the movies, reading, cooking, eating, playing basketball, drinking red wine by the beach and enjoying a pint of Guinness every so often. He enjoys racing, fighting, and shooting evil baddies on his XBOX when he gets the chance. He also likes drawing – a lot!!

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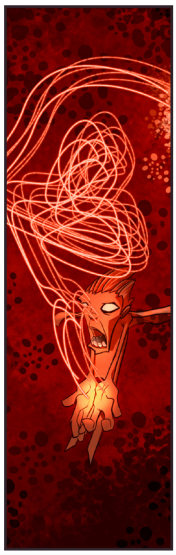


Nicolas Oroc

works at A2M as an Illustrator/ Concept Artist. His 10-year career began as an in-house Illustrator designing and creating illustrations for children's educational wildlife books, and a sports visual encyclopedia. He then freelanced for 2 years in advertising which led him into gaming. Nick has worked on AAA titles such as Ubisoft's Prince of Persia Warrior Within, Rainbow Six Lockdown, Rainbow Six Las Vegas, and Splinter Cell 5.

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David Neale



started using Photoshop whilst doing his Illustration degree in Hull, UK, and has taught himself from there onwards. After graduating in 2005, he's worked as a freelance consultant for EA games, has sold prints in galleries, and has completed various freelance projects in the illustration field. Now represented by Advocate Illustration Agency, he hopes to get more work on children's books and would also like to move into concept design for animation at some point in future.

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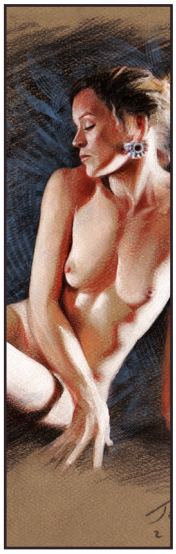
Image by Nicolas Oroc



Joel Carlo

is a Multimedia Developer residing out in Denver, Colorado. His career as an artist has spanned over the last 14 years and includes work in both traditional and digital media, web design, print, and motion graphics for broadcasting. His client list is varied and ranges from commissioned work for small studio projects to larger clients, such as Future Publishing, Burrows & Chapin, The Ayzenberg Group, NASCAR, Dodge, Toyota and Fox Television.

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Richard Tilbury



has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art and was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have slowly been dissolving in white spirit since the late nineties and now, alas, his graphics tablet has become their successor. He still sketches regularly and now balances his time between 2D and 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart.

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Tiberius Viris

is currently working as a Freelance Matte Painter/CG Artist for both the feature film and games industries, and also as an Environment Illustrator for various projects and clients. His work has also been featured in several prestigious books, such as Expose 5 and D'Artiste Matte Painting 2.

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Bente Schlick



is a German freelancer and art student from Germany. She is an Illustrator for books who would also like to work as a concept artist for games and movies in the future. Her main inspiration comes from legends, myths and poems.

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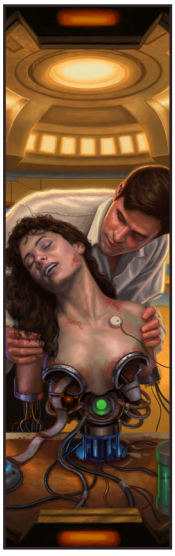


Emrah Elmasli

is a Turkish Concept Artist based in London, UK. He's working at Lionhead Studios as a full-time Senior Concept Artist. Before coming to UK, he was a freelance artist living in Istanbul, Turkey, and was working for various clients like Crystal Dynamics, Irrational Games, CGToolkit and Fantasy Flight Games, as well as ad agencies in Istanbul. He then found himself in the UK. He draws everyday and enjoys the city in his spare time.

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Eric Wilkerson



is an award-winning Painter and Illustrator, living in the New York, Hudson Valley. He has worked in publishing, logo/concept design for feature films, and various television commercial projects. His work has been included in Spectrum: the Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art Vol. 9 and 12, Expose 1, and most recently Digital Art Masters Vol. 1 from 3DTotal. He also has an unhealthy addiction to Star Trek.

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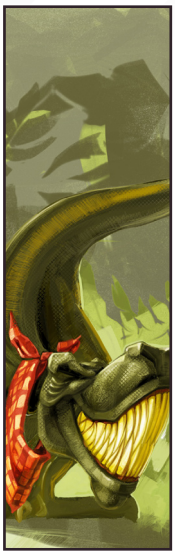


Andrew Berends

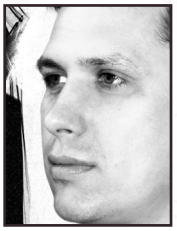
is a Concept Artist/Multimedia Designer living in Australia, working freelance in everything from corporate and web design to creature design and matte painting. He also works in 3D and Motion Graphics, but his passion is pre-production and post-production for the entertainment industry and he's always on the lookout for a position that could lead to such work. He's a big movie fan and enjoys nothing better than a good story told well! www.hawkfishmedia.com.au

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János Kiss



designs identities, brochures, flyers and so on, and sometimes also illustrations for a small company in Budapest, Hungary. Apart from graphic design, he works to improve his digital painting – it is a pleasure for him. He usually works with Painter and ArtRage. Nowadays, his main goal is to develop his portfolio, demonstrating several styles & techniques.

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Ryan Slater

is currently a Draftsman/ Photosimulator in Vancouver, Canada. With a background in classical animation he moonlights as a freelance artist, and is also in the midst of developing stories for children's books. Ryan's main goal is to put a smile on peoples' faces with his art, and hopes to accomplish this through whatever medium he can get his hands on!

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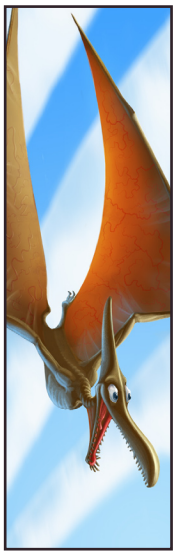




Image by Bjorn Hurri

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An Interview with Nick Oroc, a texture artist in the gaming industry, currently working in Montreal...

NICK OROC



"THE QUALITY OF MY WORK IS ALL BASED ON MY TRADITIONAL FOUNDATION. DEVELOPING A GOOD COMPREHENSION IN LAYOUT DESIGN, COMPOSITION, COLOUR, AND ESPECIALLY DRAWING..."

NICK OROC

Nick Oroc is a concept artist working at A2M in Montreal. He started out as an illustrator before finally making the move into games, where he began his new career as a texture artist. He currently works in the illustration and concept department where he believes this sector of the industry offers endless, creative possibilities...

You attended the Adapt conference this year in Montreal as a guest speaker. Can you describe the experience for us and say a little about the value of the show, for anyone unfamiliar with it ?

Well... I was quite honoured when my friend Emile (one of the founders of Adapt) asked if I'd be interested in participating at the event this year, in early Spring of 2007. My first response to this was "Cool, I'd love to see the show!" and he replied back by saying "No, no, no; I've seen some of your work for the first time and I'd like to invite you as a guest speaker!" Without hesitation, I agreed and I'm glad that I did. It's an experience that I'll never forget! I take pride and pleasure in what I do for a living, and I enjoy demonstrating some of my techniques to friends









and colleagues when they ask me “How did you do that?!” With this in mind, I felt that Adapt would be an excellent venue in demonstrating a part of my skills to a larger crowd. Education is what Adapt is all about! The event exposes people to the visual art fields and opportunities in the entertainment industry. You basically get a “behind the scenes” glimpse from guest speakers in the fields of animation, concept art, and special effects (VFX).

Which presentations were amongst your favourites at Adapt this year, and who did you find inspiring amongst the line up?

On the 2D side, Syd Mead, because he’s the Godfather and very entertaining to hear live; Mark Goerner and Ryan Church, as their art is

very slick, and my friends the Steambot Crew because they are the artistic French mafia with crazy painting skills!

On the 3D side, the guys from Pixar and ILM just blew me away! All the behind the scenes stuff they showed from Ratatouille and Transformers was just mind-blowing! What they are capable of doing in terms of visuals is always an inspiration.

How difficult was the transition from traditional illustration to working as a texture artist, and what prompted the shift back to illustration and concept work?

To be honest with you, becoming a texture artist wasn't all that hard. What got me the job was in fact my ability to draw and paint things realistically, in either Photoshop or acrylics. It was a talented and good friend of mine (Michael Yeomans) that had been working at Ubisoft Montreal for about 6 years, who finally convinced me to apply. He said that they needed artists with my abilities. The only challenges I experienced was getting used to working on an image size that was 512x512 pixels. That's seriously small! But, I learned a good lesson in doing so. Painting efficiently can be as simple as a few key contrasted strokes in bringing out important details.







My shift back to illustration and concept art was due to several things. Texture painting was slowly being replaced by new technologies, such as normal mapping, and I wasn't enjoying it as much because of its limitation to image size and detail. I felt I was at a halt as an artist, and an opportunity as a marketing artist opened up. Last but not least, I seriously missed illustrating and designing. Once an artist, always an artist!

The experience was great in terms of learning new techniques, which I still use today.

Do concept artists in your industry specialise in particular areas, or does everyone cover the same subject matter?

That all depends on the project's needs. But, most commonly, the team is broken up by speciality in character design, environment/



props design, and storyboarding. Luckily at A2M, artists get to do it all, whereas at Ubisoft an artist will stick to one task.

Covering every base affords more opportunities, but do you ever find that you are working on a design, perhaps even struggling a little, and think, "Actually this would be better suited to someone else in the team as it is more in tune with their particular skill set?"

Absolutely! I never feel ashamed to admit when I can't handle a particular task. This comes with experience and gut instinct. When an art director approaches me with a piece I usually tell him/her whether I can take it on or not. This is usually based on several factors: time, efficiency, and if I'm capable of doing it. But, time is usually the factor which is why there are usually 2-3 artists assigned to a project from my experience. One tech artist, one specialising in characters, and one dealing with environments. I usually don't push away an assignment because I like and enjoy doing it all. Time is usually my enemy because production has to move on, which is why a concept team is usually formed.

Can you describe one of the pieces you most enjoyed working on and the reasons why?

I can't really decide on just one piece, but rather three. My two most recent fantasy acrylic paintings, because of the fact that I hadn't touched traditional media in over three years. And, the creature I specifically created for my presentation at Adapt, which was seriously fun demonstrating in front of the audience. I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did creating it!

Your bio touches upon the creative possibilities that the games industry offers, but what specific skill sets do you feel are necessary to the job if someone was considering moving into that sector, say from a traditional illustration/painting background for example?

Having traditional media roots is always a good thing and makes for a stronger CG artist. It's only a matter of being open and learning new





tools that the trade demands. For those who want to make a transition into gaming, I suggest getting a copy of either Photoshop or Corel Painter and start practising and developing your painting skills. CG painting has an endless amount of painting and creative possibilities that traditional media can't produce. Painting in CG is simply more effective when it comes to in-house production work. This industry revolves around speed and constant modifications. Art and designs constantly evolve or get changed. Some artists, including myself, still draw and scan images but finalise the painting in Photoshop or Painter. Learning basic 3D doesn't hurt either! It can help in previsualising complicated angles and perspective within an environment scene. You can then use the 3D render as a template and paint on top of it.

It seems as though many artists now combine numerous disciplines, such as 3D packages, photography and 2D software to speed up the creative process. Do you see this as a natural evolution that will push artistic boundaries, or a way in which certain skills are substituted for more sophisticated tools?

Well, there was a time (earlier in school) when I felt that drawing on the computer was an evil cheat!! Ha ha ha! That not using a pencil, paper, canvas, paint or brush was just plain cheating! It was a time of primitive desktops and software; a time when rendering a plain modelled stick figure in 3D Studio (Dos mode) would take forever – so long to render that I had the time to go for lunch, get a coffee, play hacky sac for about 45 mins, get back to my desk and still have at least 20 minutes left of rendering. It was a time where I felt that the computer couldn't keep up with traditional art. Which is why I concentrated more on traditional classes. But things evolved over the past 10 years and speed is not an issue. So, the way I see it, the more you know (regarding techniques, 3D and 2D software) the better off you are! I do, and use, whatever it takes to get the job done, without losing quality in work. The quality of my work is all based on my traditional foundation.



Developing a good comprehension in layout design, composition, colour, and especially drawing. There are some basic things every artist needs and must know. Also, experimenting with different mediums is a good thing and loads of fun! That's always been my way of thinking. Time is always a production artist's enemy, that's why we resort to these mediums in order to speed up and keep up with production. I don't deny using them, but when I have the time to put into my work I don't hesitate in picking up a good ol' sharpened pencil and paper.

I know that you come from a background in "hyper realism". Does this type of work always involve drawing from photographs or life, and how easy is it for you to concept something for a game that does not exist, such as an alien creature, when you have no direct references to speak of?

Hyper realism is creating a fictional scene, object, or character realistically. But even a hyper realistic piece has to go through its conceptual phase. And that means lots of sketching without







reference in order to find the perfect pose and perfect composition. That's when raw drawing skills and drawing from the mind come into play. Knowing anatomy and compositional design is very crucial. Photo reference is used in the end for all the necessary details. When it comes to creating a fictional character/creature/environment, most of the time I draw off the top of my head. Fiction is fun to draw because it's kind of like playing God where you're creating a world, a creature, or an object. I personally find more enjoyment creating something fictional rather than drawing or painting something that already exists. But don't get me wrong, being able to reproduce what I see from either still life or photographs is what got me to where I am today. Important and crucial skills to have as an artist which I use more imaginatively.

Given that you prefer fictional subject matter, do you feel as though the games industry is your perfect niche?

Absolutely! It's this industry and the great people I've worked with that have moulded me into what I am today. Working with many talented artists specialising in their field has been a great trip and inspiration, and I hope to continue doing it for a long time. Gaming fulfils my CG creative needs whereas potential freelance jobs fills my appetite as a traditional artist as well. I like to diverse myself creatively. I guess it's every artist's nature to explore different mediums and venues. Or maybe it's just me? He he he.

NICK OROC

For more work by this artist please visit:

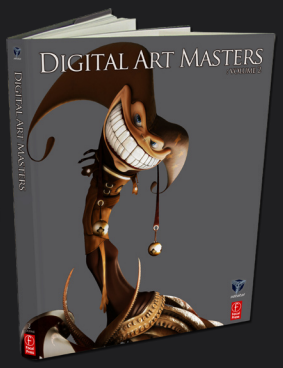
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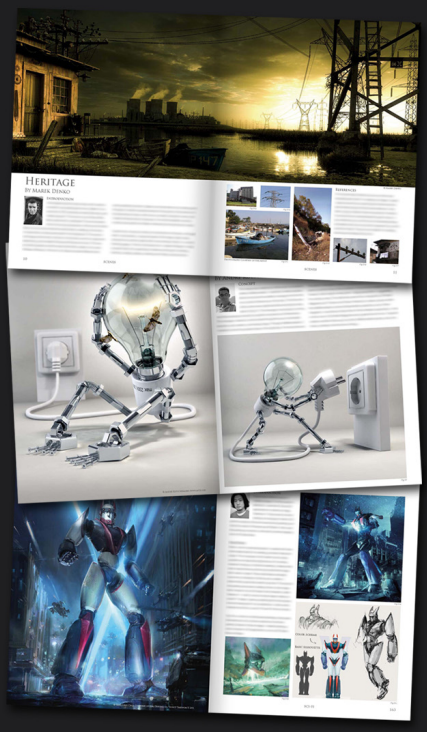
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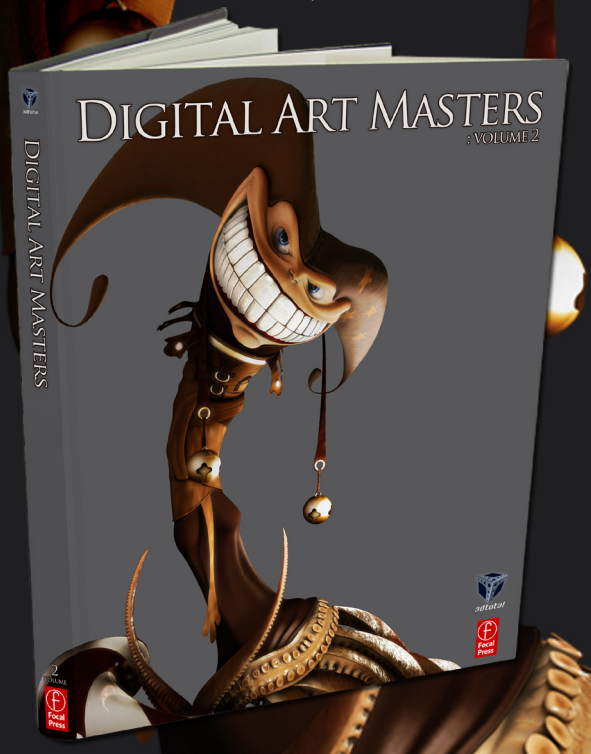
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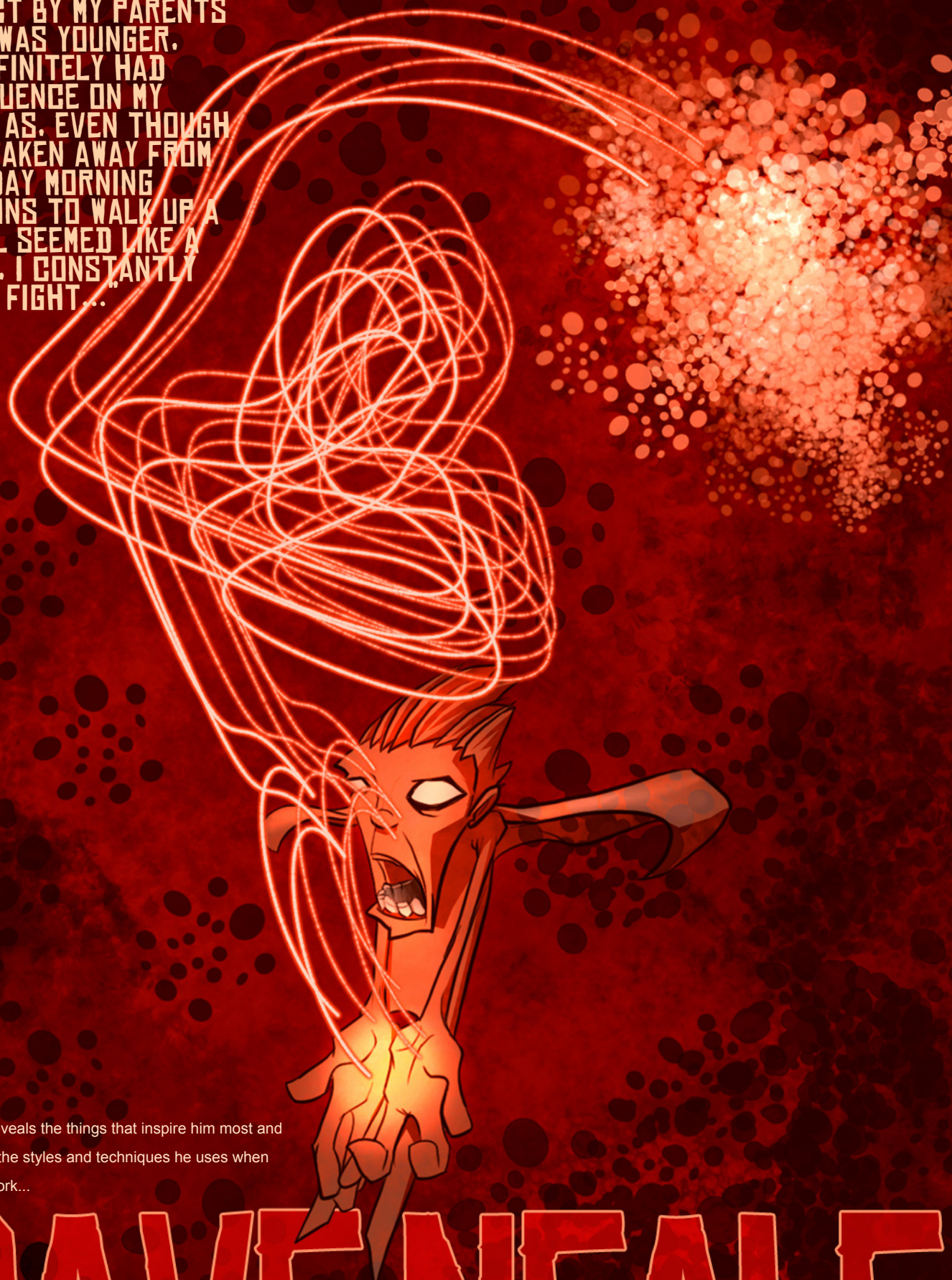
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Dave Neale reveals the things that inspire him most and tells us about the styles and techniques he uses when creating his work...

DAVE NEALE

DAVE NEALE

Hi Dave, can you tell us about yourself please?
Hey, well I'm a quarter of a century done with life, and currently working hard to become the best doodler I can be. I'm currently living in a small town called Penrith up in Cumbria, where you'd think I'd take a lot of inspiration from the surrounding countryside, but when I want to reference some hills I'm more likely to head to Google. I'm pretty driven, and you could say a bit of a workaholic, but I love my job – drawing pictures for a living is one of those things I never really believed was something someone like me could do!

Have you always lived in Cumbria or did you relocate there for the inspirational countryside?
I've been in Cumbria since I was 4 years old, so other than my Uni years I've been there pretty much my whole life. I think living there,



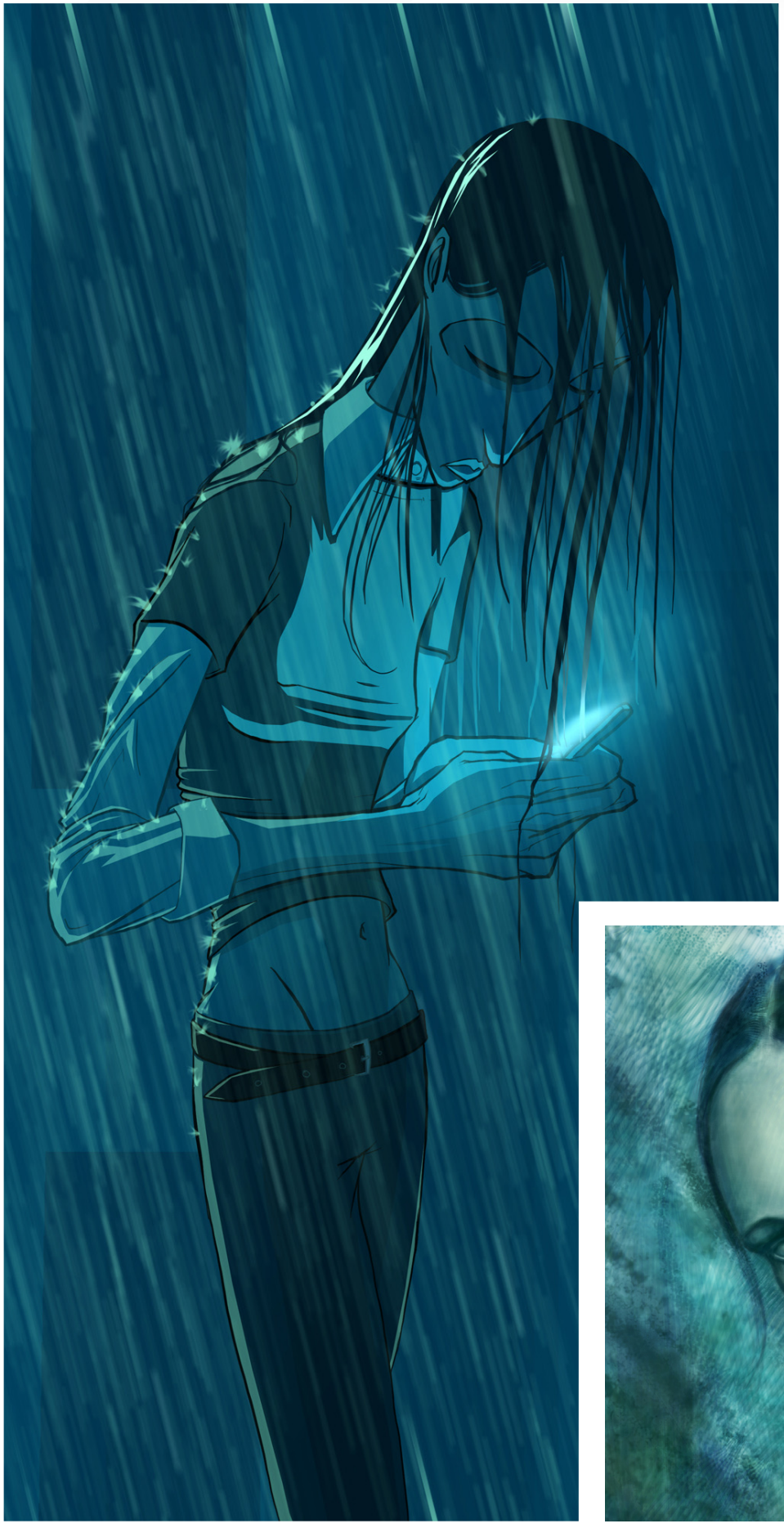




and being dragged round the Lake District by my parents when I was younger, has definitely had an influence on my work... as, even though being taken away from Saturday morning cartoons to walk up a big hill seemed like a battle, I constantly had to fight. Actually experiencing the cool forests, streams and lakes gave me a real appreciation for nature, and more importantly helped build my visual library of natural elements. In the summer, I try to get out into the countryside and I love to sit in isolated fields (that I'm probably not supposed to be in) with a sketchbook drawing whatever comes to mind.

Could you tell us a bit about your schooling or are you're a self-taught artist?

Well I've always loved art, and went through school taking it as the fun subject in between all the others that I had to endure. I went to college with the intention of going into product design (I'd never realised that illustration was even a possibility), but it was there that I had some cool tutors who pointed me in the right direction. I went on to study illustration in Hull, which to be honest wasn't the greatest "education" I've received, but the lack of course focus did allow me the time to do what I wanted, and it was the second year that I think I eventually realised that, if I worked my ass off, maybe I could do this for a living. Aside from a few cool people along the way giving me some pointers, I'm largely self-taught. It was the second year of Uni when I also taught myself Photoshop, which has been the single most important thing I think I did at Uni. I can't imagine what it's like working as I do in anything other than a digital medium!



So what sort of work are you currently doing at the moment?

The last couple of months I've been very busy; I've been getting some really fun stuff and all varied as well, which keeps me interested. Skateboard deck designs, logo designs, backgrounds for an online computer game, educational illustrations for schools, a children's book, and I'm pretty sure a whole load of other work I must have forgotten (once a project has finished it slips from my mind right away as there's always something new right after to fill the momentary void). This is the first time I've been this busy, and it's exciting to be juggling all of these at once! A few 16-18 hour days, lots of coffee, and the knowledge that there will be cheques in the post has seen me through.

Do you feel being a freelance artist is right for you, or would you feel working a 9-5 job in an art studio somewhere more suitable?

I love freelancing. I'm kind of new to it, but it keeps things interesting and fun. It can be a pretty lonely existence when you have a bunch of deadlines and no time to visit friends, but overall it suits me down to the ground. There is a lot more freedom to do different and interesting things when freelancing.







I did do some work at a games studio a year or two back, which was one of the highlights of my short career so far; I loved having other artists to work with and draw inspiration from. I think, at some point, I would like to get some in-house concept work, but I think that's a little further down the line.

Different artists have different ways of producing things, so could you give us a little insight into how you go about creating your illustrations?

It all depends, but on the whole reference is my starting point. Unless I have a really clear idea of what I want, I'll hit the Net and go in search of anything I'll need. Recently I've been doing a lot more thumbnail sketches, which is a really good way to get the overall feel of the image down quickly. It used to be that I would try to go at an image right off, which sometimes led to endless tweaks and shuffles later on in the process. Then, once I've decided on the composition and colour scheme, I'll attack the picture, inking first (if it's a line-art image) or blocking things in if it's a more rendered image. I'm a big fan of pleasant mistakes, so I'll usually do random experiments throughout making an image, but this needs to be balanced out with a focus on what I'm trying to achieve, as well as time constraints.

So how long would you spend (on average) on doing something like this?

I would say most images take me 1-2 days, though my definition of a day is usually 12-14 hours rather than a 9-5. It really depends how much tweaking is involved and how much planning I do, and obviously the complexity of an image is the real test!



Being one of many illustrators that are around today, how do you think your style of work differs from the rest, and how would you best describe your style of work?

It's hard for me to look objectively at my work and know exactly what it is that is different. I have a style that has been born from the many artists I admire, the experiences I've had, and what I've come to think of as beautiful. My style is always changing, which for me is really exciting as things are always new and different. I try to experiment with different styles too, and often different jobs require different looks. If someone asks me this question I usually say that my work is a mix of darker, gothic influences, mixed with comic and graffiti art – all jumbled up and differing from piece to piece.

Throughout an artist's career, they will always look at artwork by their favourite artists, whether for research or inspiration. So which do you find your inspiration from?

I have a folder on my computer with inspirational images, which has thousands of images I've found on the Net and is always growing. Whenever I feel a block, or just want some inspiration, I'll dip in there and never fail to be impressed with the wealth of really REALLY

talented artists out there. It's always a little intimidating to see how much further there is to go before I even get close to some of these talented guys, but it's also inspiring to see what you can do if you knuckle down and try to better your work at every turn. Mucha, Schiele and Giacometti were great inspirations to me early on, just because of they're awesome stylisation. Right now I'm bowled over by Jim Murray, Audrey Kawasaki, Bobby Chiu, Greg Simkins, Joy Ang, Trevor Claxton, Ryan Church, and so many other cool artists working right now.

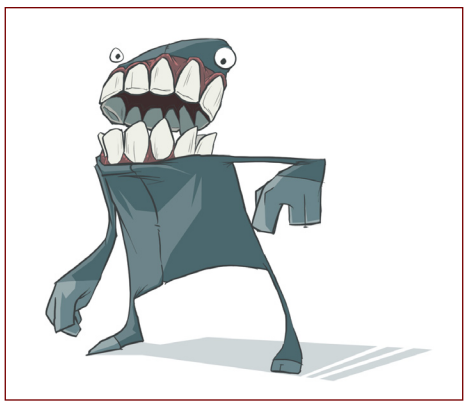
Well it has been a really pleasure getting to know a bit about you. One last question before we wrap things up, though. What has been the most influential piece of advice that you have been given and by whom?

That's a hard one! I've been told by a few people that as long as you work your ass off, and really try to better yourself at every turn, then you will improve and hopefully get where you want to go. I would say that has been hammered into me over the years and is the mind-set I have towards work. That, or being told by a college tutor to be an illustrator – that was pretty good advice!

DAVE NEALE

For more work by this artist please visit:
www.daveneale.co.uk
Or contact them at:
davejneale@hotmail.com

Interviewed by: Chris Perrins





"I USUALLY ATTEND THE SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS SO I CAN MEET PEOPLE THAT HAVE THE SAME INTERESTS AS ME..."

He's worked on iconic comic figures such as Spiderman and Batman, Illustrator and comic arts Andie Tong takes time out to chat with us about his work and his latest projects

Andie Tong



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Andie Tong



Thanks for taking the time to talk to me Andie. Now, just so the readers know, we met very briefly at the Birmingham Comic Show where you were drawing at the 'Draw the World Together' charity organisation table. How did it go, and can you tell what you normally hope to achieve by attending the comics shows?

No problems at all. Thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

The 'Draw the World Together' event was actually my first. I'd been intending to participate in this event for the last few shows, but missed out because I got fairly swamped at my table and I ended up failing to make it to their booth. So this time, I specifically took part in the event and participated for both days without any interruptions or worries about getting back and attending my own booth. From what I heard from the organisers, we did okay. We pushed the cause a bit further and gave it a little more time in the spotlight, which is always good. I would definitely contribute again if they would have me.

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I usually attend the shows and conventions so I can meet people that have the same interests as me. To connect, to find out if my work is good and appreciated, or to get feedback and see what I need to improve. It also gives me the chance to pass my work around; to put it out into the public arena and let it reach those that don't know me or follow the books



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that I draw. Because comic creators tend to work 24/7 in solitude, (most of the time we only communicate via email or phone), conventions and shows are also an opportunity to catch up with fellow creators, mingle, be merry and to talk about other things besides comics.

I know what you mean about not seeing much of the outside world - it's the same for us running our internet business. Do you have any tips for staying sane while working this way!?

Well, go out whenever the opportunity strikes. Organise your work schedule to give you a free weekend, then head out and treat yourself. Meet up with friends, even just to have coffee. Join the gym, go to dance classes, so you can meet people. Not really great tips but practical ones, I suppose. When I'm working, I usually have music or an old movie or anime that I've seen before playing in the background. I guess when you love the job you do, you tend to stay sane no matter what the circumstances. Your social skills just tend to suffer a bit in return! I live with a great friend and my dog as well, so they keep me sane by talking to me. No, really, my dog talks to me. Honest.

Tell us a little bit about your background and some of the projects you've done, such as the 'The Architect'.

Well, my background is actually in Multimedia and Graphic Design but I've been drawing since kindergarten. I've always loved drawing; it started as a hobby when I was young and then I was doing it part time for the nine years that I worked as a designer. It's only recently that I was able to give up design completely to concentrate full time on comics.

Even though I wanted to be a comic artist at an early age, I didn't think it was possible with the centre of the comic industry a world away in America and Japan. I thought I had to live in those countries in order to be a comic artist, so design seemed like the next best thing for me and I guess it was also more financially viable. I figured if I did end up chasing my comic dream and failing, at least I could fall back on designing. (This remains my current plan!)



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Not that I wasn't doing fun stuff in design; I was creating screen and film presentations for some high profile identities. At the end of it though, I loved drawing the human figure too much and unfortunately I just wasn't getting to do that via design. I liked the traditional hand skills of putting pencil to paper, but in design I was mainly working with a mouse and keyboard. So in 2000, when I discovered that you could do comics from anywhere in the world via the World Wide Web and email, I started pursuing my dream of becoming a comic artist. It's taken me seven years, but I'm finally working full time in the comic industry. The challenge now is to remain there - and that will probably be the hardest task yet!

In retrospect, working in design was a good move because it gave me a steady foundation for which I could pursue my aspirations as a comic artist. You end up using a lot of the same tools in comics that you do in design. Applications like Photoshop, Illustrator and Painter are not easy programmes to learn if you've never used them before. It can be quite daunting. Being a designer introduced

me to those skills and I still use them today in comics. Having the background understanding of resolutions, dpi, CMYK, scanning, etc, saved me from asking a lot of basic questions when I made the move into comics, especially as a lot of corrections, file transfers and communications are done digitally nowadays and these questions are sometimes hard to find answers to.

So since my inception into comics in 2000, my portfolio of work has come to include covers and sequentials for the titles Spectacular Spiderman UK, Batman Strikes, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Khenan: Mad Secret, Starship Troopers, Noble Causes, He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, and pin ups in Blade of the Immortal and Bloodrayne. I've also done commercial work for DC, Warner Bros, Nike, Mforma, Universal, CBS, Hasbro's Duelmasters game, including illustrations for Whitewolf's "Exalted" fantasy gaming books and 80s homage magazine, Cereal: Geek.



I got involved with The Architect after a comic project that I invested a lot of time and energy into pretty much blew up in my face. That was my first humbling introduction to the world of comic publishing. After that, I was fishing for a more guaranteed project that would definitely see print. I did a few anthologies for small publishers just to get my name out there. Then I got introduced to Mike Baron by a fellow creator.

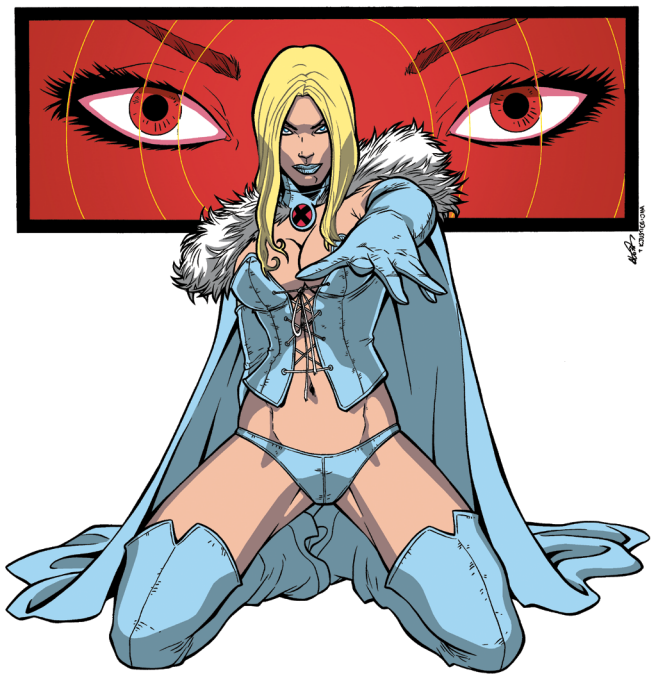
Powergirl © 2008 DC Comics. All rights reserved. Drawn as fanart

I knew Mike's work but, shamefully, I didn't know Mike. After some Google researching I found out he was practically a legend in comics, so meeting him was too good an opportunity to pass up and I was completely honoured that he would consider me as an artist for one of his projects.

As I was still working full time as a designer at this stage, and the project was an unpaid collaboration, it took me close to five years (with several breaks in between) to finally complete The Architect. I ended up working 18 hours a day, almost 7 days a week and it was taking it's toll on me. Mike ended up scouting for publishers that could supplement paying us upfront for the project and that's when we landed on the doorstep of Big Head Press. Mike and the whole Big Head Press crew were extremely patient with me, bless them. By this time, I was on the verge of giving up design all together and to just concentrate on comics so it was perfect timing. They ended up paying for all the pages finished previously and worked out a feasible deadline for me to finish the rest without interfering with the other regular comic gigs I had going on. Within two or so months, I had completed the rest of the pages.



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Whitequeen © 2008 Marvel Comics. All rights reserved. Drawn as fanart

The Architect was definitely a good learning curve and the biggest project I've undertaken to date. Since the book's been published I've been itching to do a bigger, badder graphic novel, but with my current work load, it's just been impossible to even consider it. Hopefully one day soon.

That's a great tale with a happy ending! If you don't mind me asking, when did the book go on sale and how successful has it been in terms of copies sold?

The Architect finally hit the shelves around August 2007. I don't know the actual figure of sales, but according to Big Head Press we did okay. For actual figures it's best to speak to the head honchos themselves, Scott and Frank Bieser.

You have a very impressive list of company names that you've worked for on your CV. Did these companies come to you, or did you have to work hard to get noticed?

Thank you. However, I still think I've got a very long way to go! Hopefully

the list of companies will expand as time carries on. I feel like I'm only scratching the surface at the moment, but It's always good to know I'm heading in the right direction. So thanks!

I think you always have to work hard to get noticed in this competitive industry. There are a lot of talented guys out there and I'm sure they all want what I'm doing. Having been in the design industry for quite a while, I've gained a sense of reality as to what working in a creative industry is like. I've come to realise that no one is u-nexpendable. So yes, I work hard everyday; I try to meet my deadlines and keep up to date with the networking and contacts. It's so important to maintain your contacts. Almost 90% of my gigs have come about because I was recommended by a creator buddy or by word of mouth. It's not an easy juggle sometimes as there're simply not enough hours in a day.

When I first started out, I was just posting my artwork up on art forums via the internet. Eventually I got noticed by Whitewolf and got offered to do illustrations for their gaming books. I also got approached by several small press publishers through the internet and slowly but surely, I started doing more and more comic work.

How I got the Spectacular Spiderman UK gig was a story in itself. I was at the Bristol comic expo, sitting at my table, and I had my folio open. It was supposed to be showing a Spidey drawing I'd done a while back in my spare time, but someone had gone through my folio and flipped the pages to some other random artwork. The editor of Spectacular Spiderman UK happened to walk past at the very moment that I noticed my folio page was no longer on Spidey. (I didn't realise at this point that he was any sort of editor, of course. I just thought he was a random comic book fan!) Seeing some of the other random artwork that I had in my folio, the editor was about to walk on when I flipped back to the Spidey page. The editor literally performed an exorcist head turn, saw the Spidey piece, walked back to my table, offered me a card and told me to call him when I got the chance. And as they say, the rest was history. So it was literally the right moment, the right time. If I had flipped the page a moment later, I would probably still be a designer to this day.

The lesson I learned that day, was that conventions are truly important if you want to really move forward in the comic industry. No matter how many people tell you how talented you are, (or how talented you think you might be), showing your work online, or what not, pales in comparison to when you meet an editor at a convention and get to show him your work personally.

I guess that for an editor, it's maybe easier to hire someone if they've met you and you know. From that first impression, they can probably tell if you're an upstanding guy that's likely to deliver on the deadline, or if you're a talented, but a flake. I suppose ultimately everyone wants to be able to work with someone they can rely on, especially with looming deadlines on the horizon. Of course, this is just my theory on why conventions work.



The Architect © 2008 Mike Baron, Andie Tong, Big Head Press. All rights reserved. Used with permission

Believe me, before the conventions, I had been bombarding publishers and companies for years to try and get work, with little success. So yes, if you're an aspiring comic artist, comic conventions are gold!

…And that sounds like golden advice too Andie!

Can you tell us a little bit about your methods and techniques?

I've never really analysed my methods or techniques. I suppose when it comes down to it, I just pick up a pencil and draw. On the technical process side of things though, it's a bit more thought out.

Firstly I read the script and brief, then I thumbnail the pages out really roughly. Then I rough it out with a blue repro pencil at 100% size before going back, tightening up and finishing with a HB pencil. Then I scan it. Oh well, I guess it's not that thought out after all!

And the colouring - is that a straight forward new layer in Photoshop and then you paint away over the scan?

Well, I don't colour as much as I use to anymore. I'm concentrating mainly on my pencils but every once in a while, if I have time, I will dabble in the hues. Part of the reason is because I'm slower at colouring and also, I'm a perfectionist. That tends to go out the window when you're dealing with deadlines. So I'd rather leave that trait to the professional colourist who can do a much better job than me and do it much faster too.

Every colourist has their own techniques. I've picked a few up from an excellent artist I work with from time to time: Jeremy Roberts. He was generous enough to share his skills and process with me one time and no, I didn't get him drunk ...

He's got a far better understanding about colour tones than I have. He's a talented conceptual artist in his own right, so out of respect, I won't divulge too much detail on the process in fear of corrupting the original technique of it.



Starship Troopers © 2008 Son/Tristar, Markosia. All rights reserved. Used with permission

I have two colouring styles. One is a simple cell shading technique, and the other looks a bit more painted. I use Photoshop and Painter to achieve my end results.

With the cell shading technique, as you mentioned, it is a straight forward new layer in Photoshop. I start by colouring in all the base colours on one layer, then I have one layer for shadows and one layer for lighting. I use the effects that Photoshop provides for the shadows and lighting such as multiply, overlay, soft light, etc. At times, I tend to work on multiple lighting and shadow layers just to give the piece a bit more depth and detail. So don't feel like you have to restrict yourselves to one layer of shadow and one layer of lighting. This is just my guide on how I work. Always adapt and explore to suit your particular needs for the piece.

With the painted style, I still complete the cell shading process in Photoshop as above, but



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then I bring the piece into Painter to blend, tweak and add new colours.

Do you have any particular trademarks as such within your art, so people can say "that's a Tong, right there!"?

I draw really, really, really good. Just joking. No particular trademarks as such. I think people are slowly but surely starting to notice my work, but not through any conscious effort of mine to have a trademark. I guess I'm hoping that my art will speak for itself.

I'm influenced by a lot of artists. Masamune Shirow, Kia Asamiya, Adam Hughes, Chris Bachalo, Mike Wieringo, Arthur Adams, Joe Madureira, Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane and Humberto Ramos are just some of the artistic idols I aspire to. Over the years, I've tried to blend great aspects of each artist within my own work in the hope that one day the art will evolve to be my own. I guess you can define my art style as a culmination of lots of different great artists. I'm not sure if it's actually working or not. I hope it is.

If you were offered your ultimate dream project, what would the brief be?

Sadly, it's the typical answer and genre of titles that I would love to work on. No originality here, I'm afraid. As I'm relatively new to the industry, there's quite a lot I would still like to do. As I'm a child of that era, any number of 80's titles would be awesome. You know, properties like Thundercats, Silverhawks, Mask, etc. Superman, Batman, Spider-man, X-men, Wolverine would be grand. I don't really have a particular favourite as I love drawing all of these characters. I guess I'm aiming for diversity.



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Galaxy Rangers © 2008 Cereal: Geek, All rights reserved. Used with permission

Actually, one project which I'm constantly fighting to get in on, but never seem to manage it, would be the Star Wars universe. So if you could please spread the word, I'd greatly appreciate it!

Ultimately though, I'd love to create my own book. To have someone recognise and associate a particular property instantly with your name would be a great feeling and achievement to have.

If you could transport yourself to any location instantly, where would you go to gather your thoughts or to paint?

I would love to have a glass studio deep

underwater on the ocean bed, surrounded by marine life. Or an office outdoors in the sunshine, with a cool breeze, where I could listen to the ocean waves but also be by the forest at the same time. But obviously protected in some ways from the natural elements, as I don't think wind or rain mix particularly well with paper or computers!

So I guess in practical terms, I would have to have two different locations. One for thoughts and one for painting and drawing and such like.

For thoughts, I would still like to be out among nature. The forest or the ocean would be ideal. The next best thing for a working environment would be to have a *huge* studio with french doors and glass windows, overlooking the ocean on one side and the forest on the other, with all my resources and references on hand. What? Isn't that everyone's dream?

That deep underwater location sounds awesome, you should build that and invite me! Maybe arrange for a few gorgeous mermaids to swim around outside too, then I probably wouldn't leave either!
I suppose you could pay rent since it'll probably be a high maintenance facility. I'm sure there would be water leakage every once in a while to fix!

Seriously, its been great talking with you. We really appreciate all the time and advice that you've given us, especially considering your schedule. Keep in touch and keep that great artwork flowing our way!

Credits:
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Colours provided by Jeremy Roberts, James Offredi and Val Staples.

ANDIE TONG

For more work by this artist please visit:
www.deemonproductions.com
Or contact them at:
deemonproductions@yahoo.com
Interviewed By : Tom Greenway



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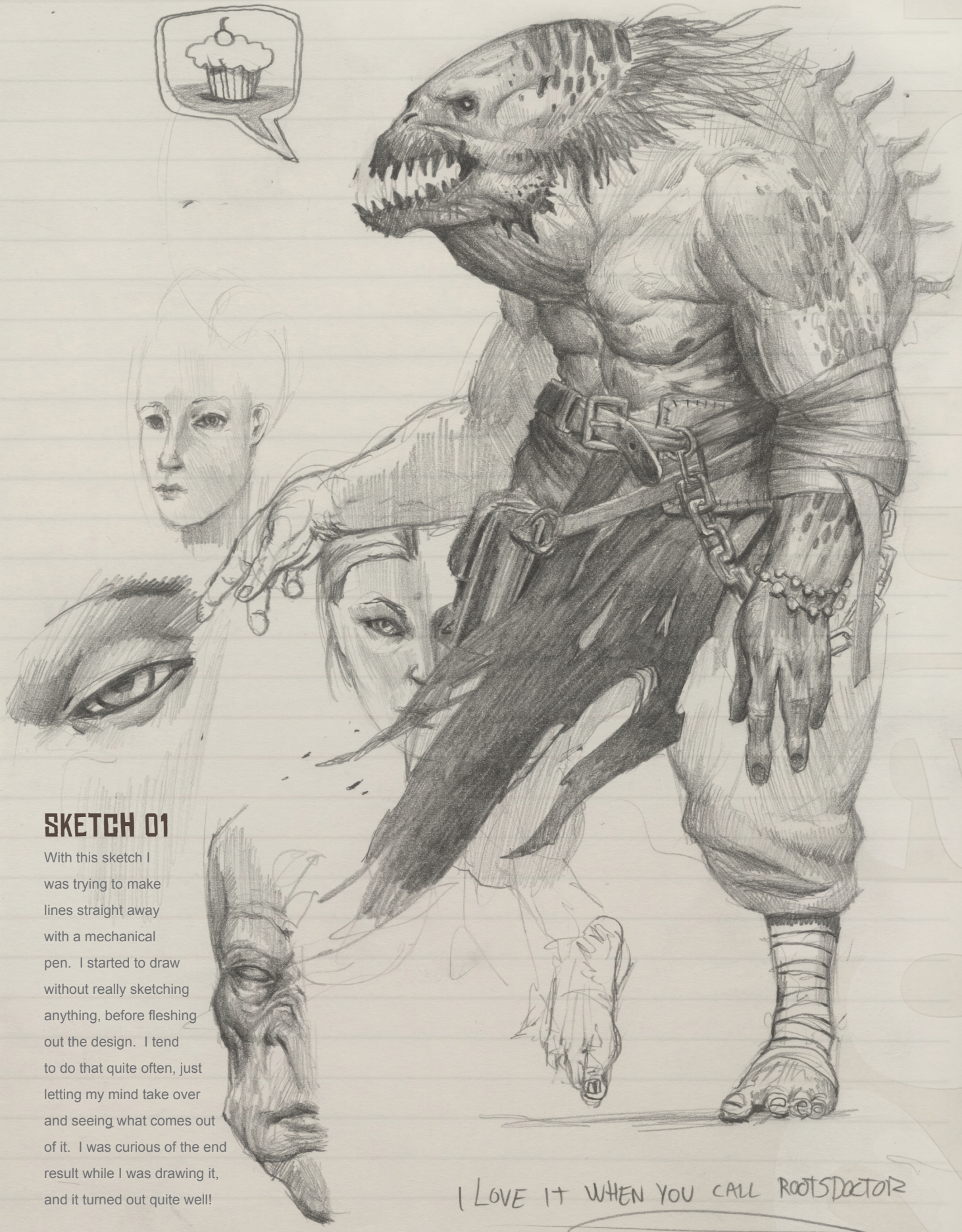
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the Sketchbook of Bjorn Hurri



SKETCH 01

With this sketch I was trying to make lines straight away with a mechanical pen. I started to draw without really sketching anything, before fleshing out the design. I tend to do that quite often, just letting my mind take over and seeing what comes out of it. I was curious of the end result while I was drawing it, and it turned out quite well!





SKETCH 02

This was an idea I had while I was on a train to see my (now) ex-girlfriend: a big mountain troll ready to crush a little girl with his big boulder. The small cages on his belt are funny because it gives the feeling that he keeps his “toys” for later if he finds too many. The result of his game is clearly seen on his big piece of rock. I wasn’t completely satisfied though so I drew another version below, where they are friends exploring rocks together. I still don’t feel that it is as powerful as I want it to be. This idea will be kept in the back of my mind for later...



Sketch 03



Sketch 04

SKETCH 03 [LEFT]

The mountain troll is back! This time I wanted to show the scale of the troll and the cuteness of the little girl. I removed the big boulder because I thought it was a bit too evil. I will transfer the idea of the boulder to some other creature where it will suit it more and will look way more menacing. Yet again, I grabbed my mechanical .7B pen and went crazy! Pushing things back into a dark void is a way of describing form, and I enjoy doing it. It is almost like looking into the sea and having bits fading into the depth.

SKETCH 04 [ABOVE]

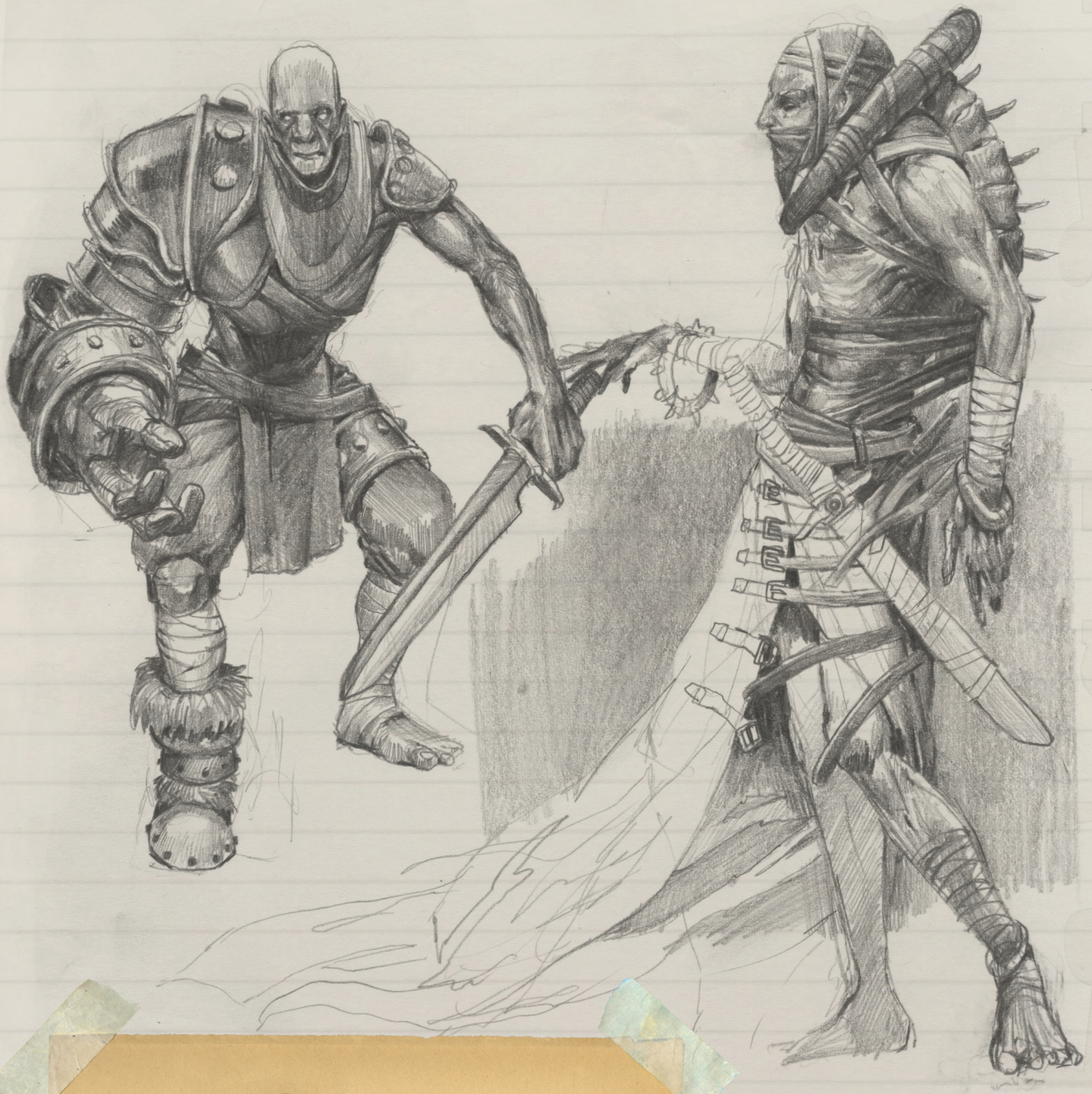
I always take my sketchbook where ever I go. A big A4 hardcover pad with nice paper is a great canvas in which to destroy with lead! This particular picture was drawn when I was sitting and waiting for an aeroplane, when saw this girl with a very cool hoodie. I copied it (very poorly mind you) and it sparked something in my mind, so I drew it again to stick it firmly in my mind. I then made the drawing where she is floating in the air, charging a magic attack or whatever – who knows. I like to do studies from life but bend them so they fit into my imagination.

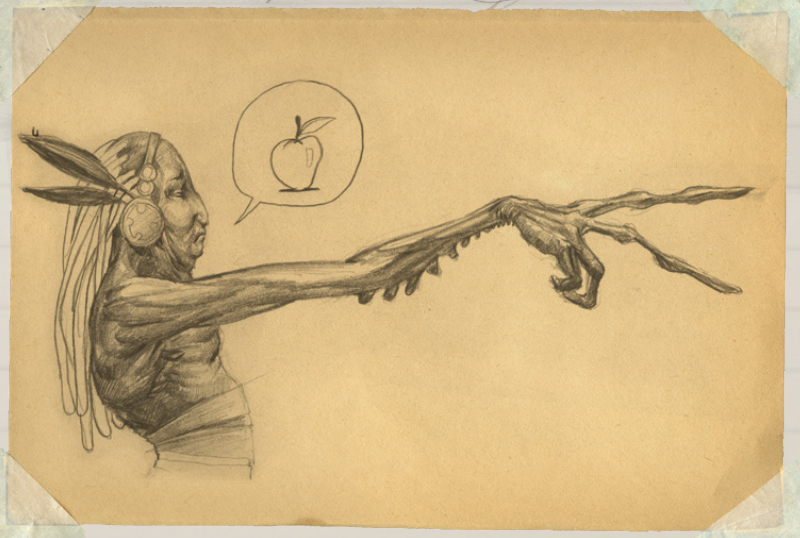


Sketch 05

SKETCH 05 [LEFT]

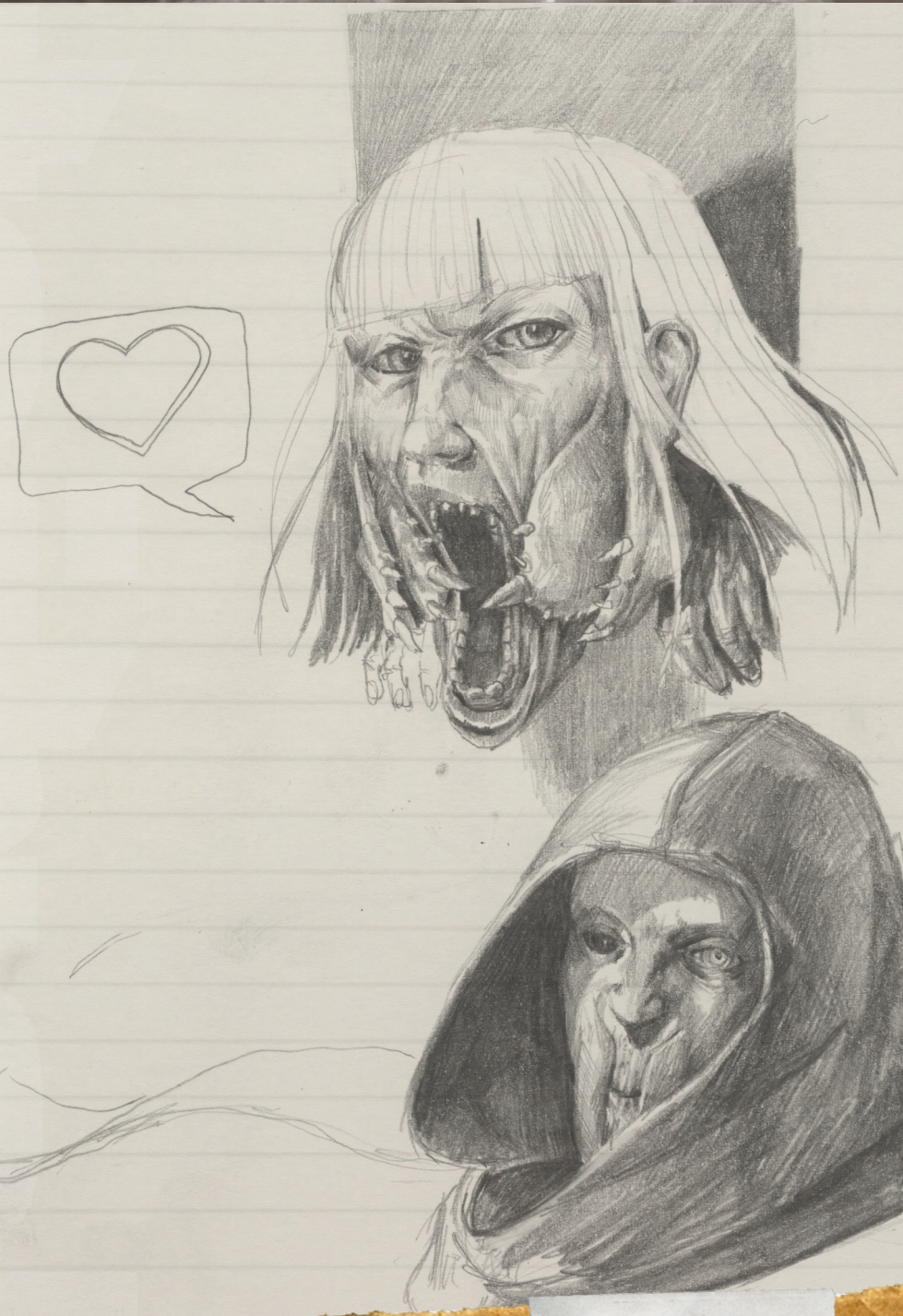
This little fellow was drawn on an A4 page with my mechanical .7B pen. Yet again, I let my mind take over and disappeared into my art, watching my hand draw what my mind wants it to. I was playing with patterns and shapes, here. It's funny how it turned out looking like a flower-monkey-cat!





SKETCH 06

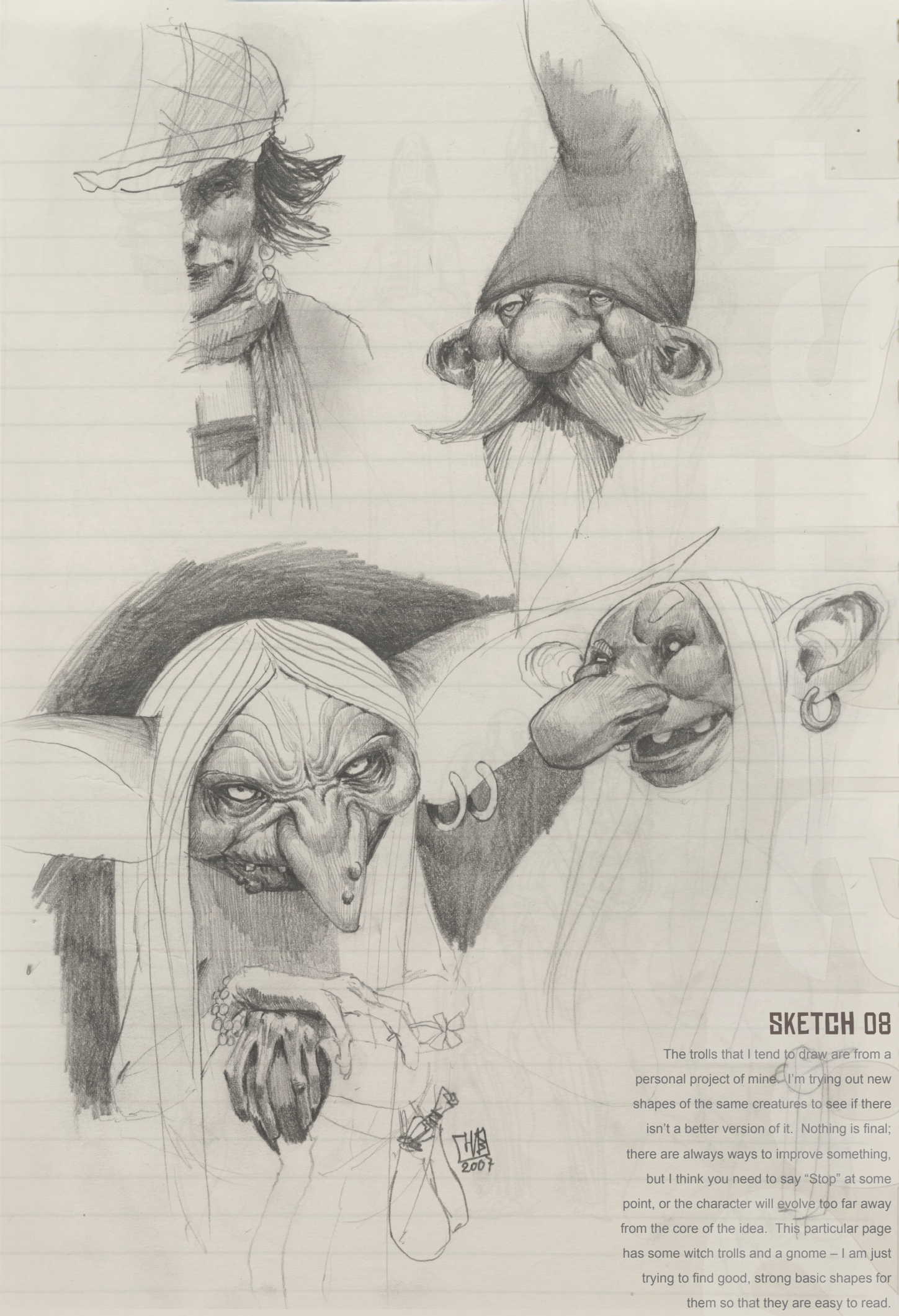
This page was drawn with lines in mind. I was trying to describe as much as possible before going into rendering, playing with form and contrasting empty spaces to balance out the designs.





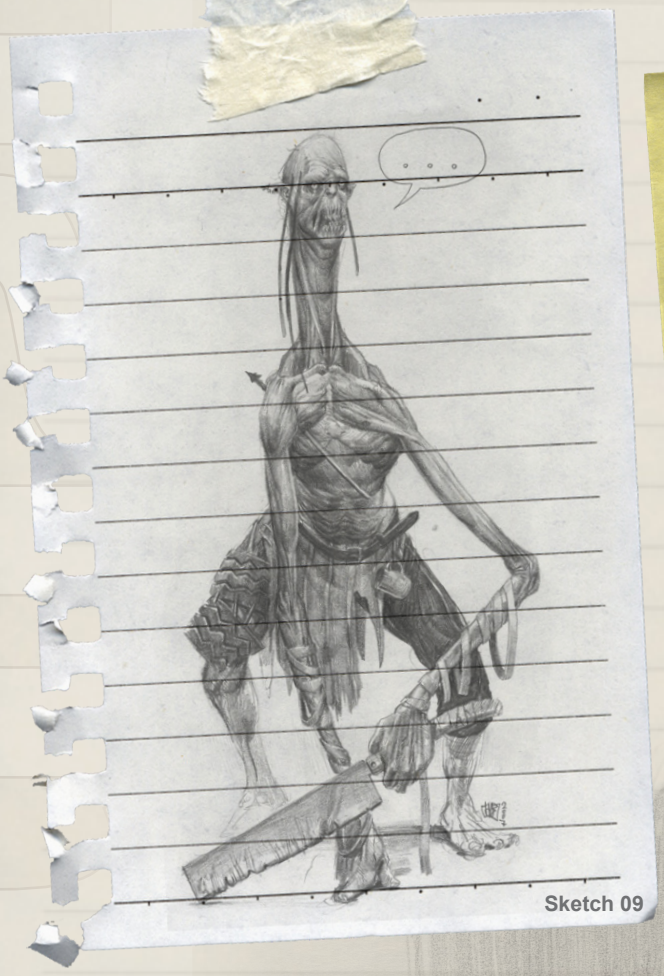
SKETCH 07

The reason behind this page was to expand the library in my mind. Drawing new shapes and forms will usually expand the possibilities of creating something new and exciting. I tend to start with random lines and force my mind into interpreting it into something functional and interesting.

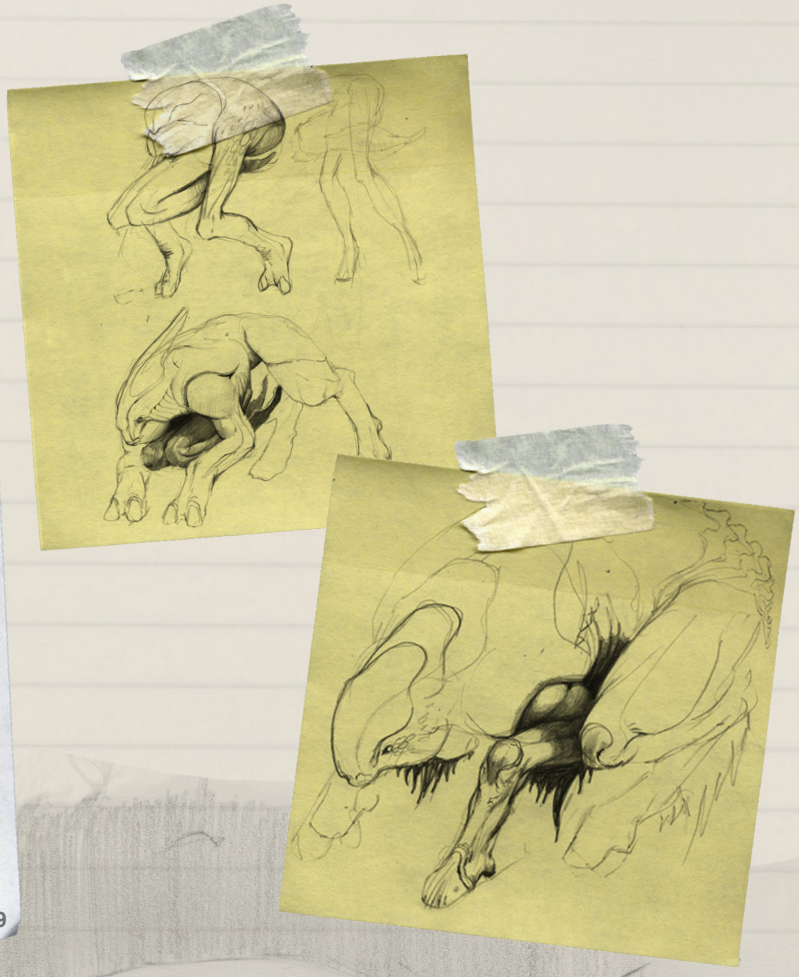


SKETCH 08

The trolls that I tend to draw are from a personal project of mine. I'm trying out new shapes of the same creatures to see if there isn't a better version of it. Nothing is final; there are always ways to improve something, but I think you need to say "Stop" at some point, or the character will evolve too far away from the core of the idea. This particular page has some witch trolls and a gnome – I am just trying to find good, strong basic shapes for them so that they are easy to read.



Sketch 09



SKETCH 09 [ABOVE]

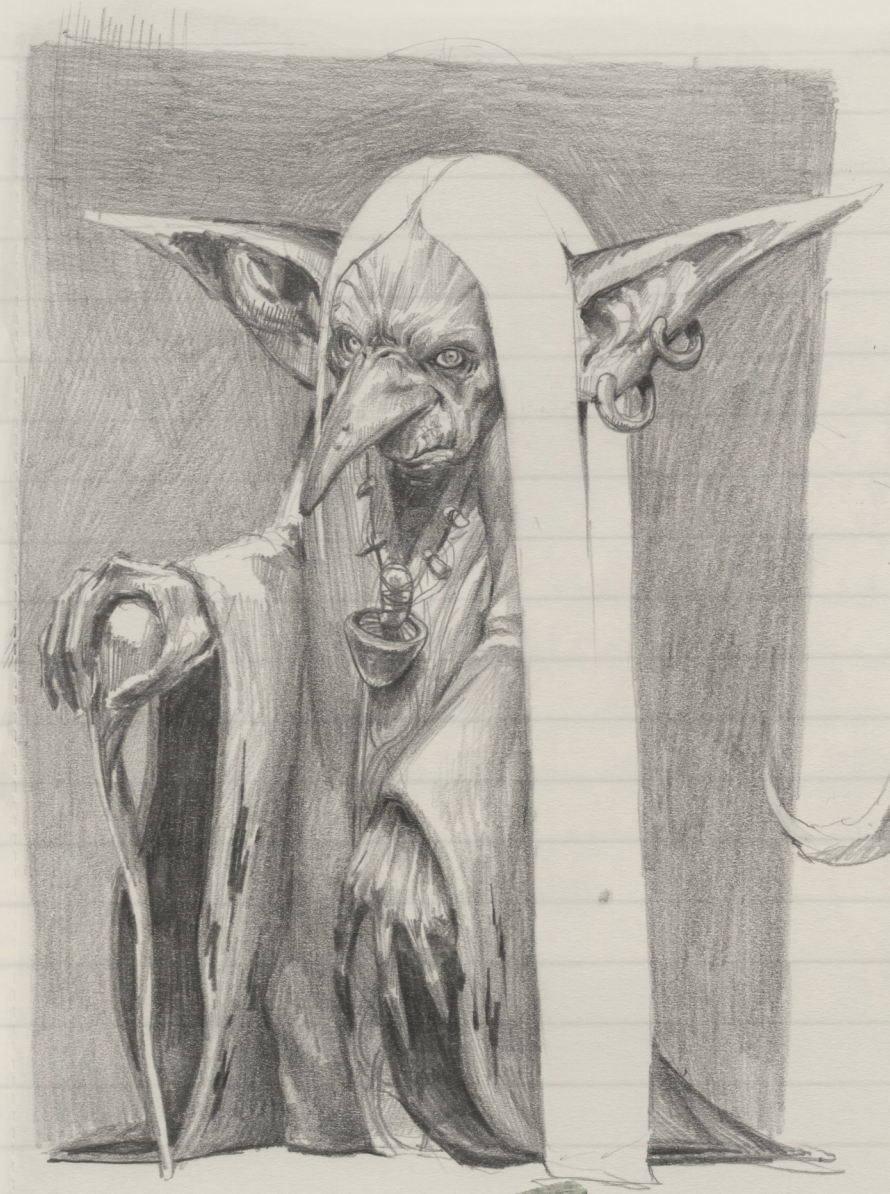
This was done for another personal project: a mutated human. Here I am playing around with stretching out features and distorting the human body.

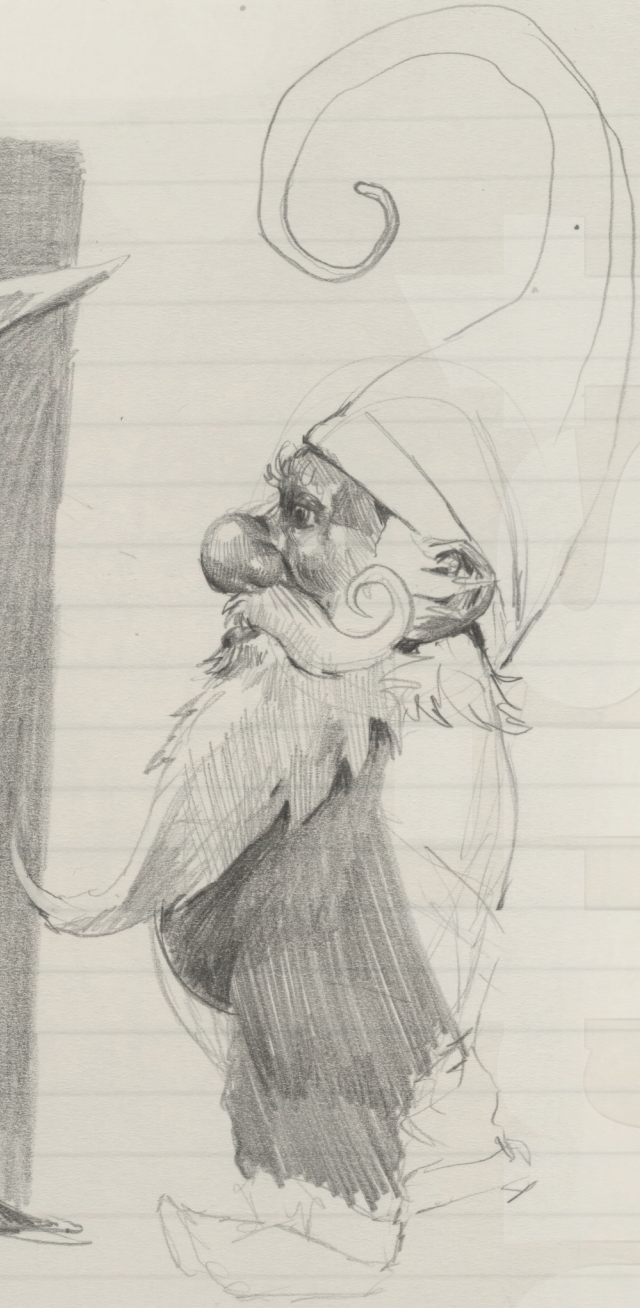
SKETCH 10 [RIGHT]

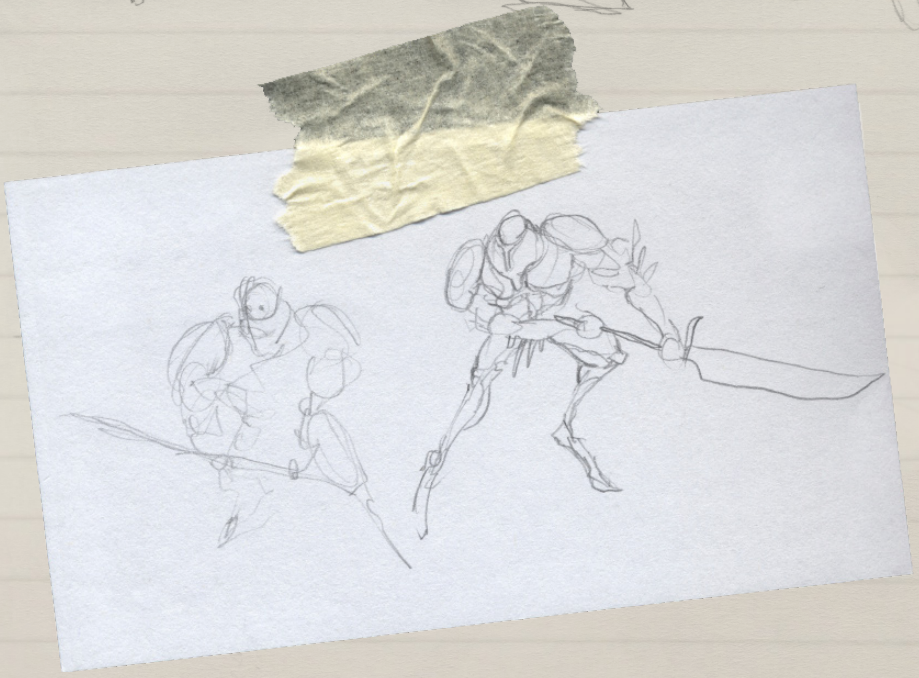
One day, after work, I was walking by the sea and I got this idea of a creature with additional legs that are tucked under the body. So I had to sit down on the beach, in the middle of a storm, and draw them out. From rough ideas, going through various stages, it ended up pretty interesting! Imagine it running in full force forwards, planting the extra set of legs and jumping far, far, far away!



Sketch 10









SKETCH 11

Yet again, I was fiddling with the basic shapes and readability of the characters... Still not quite there...

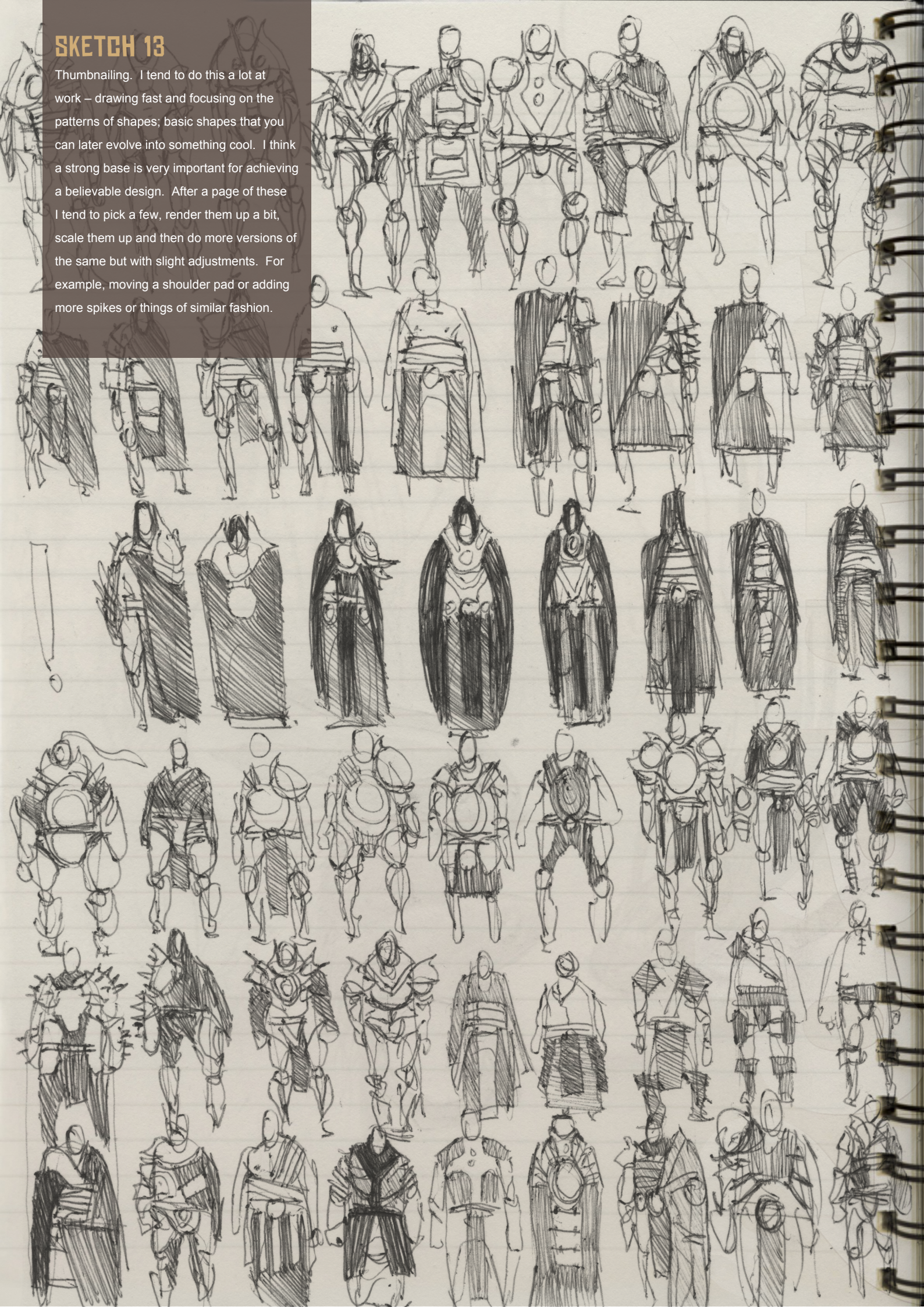


SKETCH 12

This page was drawn with a ballpoint pen, just drawing straight on without really thinking. I was trying to keep everything together in one mass. Doing that can result in some good ideas that can be kept for later!

SKETCH 13

Thumbnailing. I tend to do this a lot at work – drawing fast and focusing on the patterns of shapes; basic shapes that you can later evolve into something cool. I think a strong base is very important for achieving a believable design. After a page of these I tend to pick a few, render them up a bit, scale them up and then do more versions of the same but with slight adjustments. For example, moving a shoulder pad or adding more spikes or things of similar fashion.




ARMOR DESIGNS
HP
2K6



Sketch 15



Sketch 14

SKETCH 14 [RIGHT]

Just a random idea without any real thought behind it...

SKETCH 15 [ABOVE]

I was looking through a history book and I saw these captains, and my imagination instantly took over! I picked up my sketchbook and played around with the idea of having alien captains with plasma flintlock guns.



SKETCH 16

This was a random page of doodles I made while listening to someone talking to me...



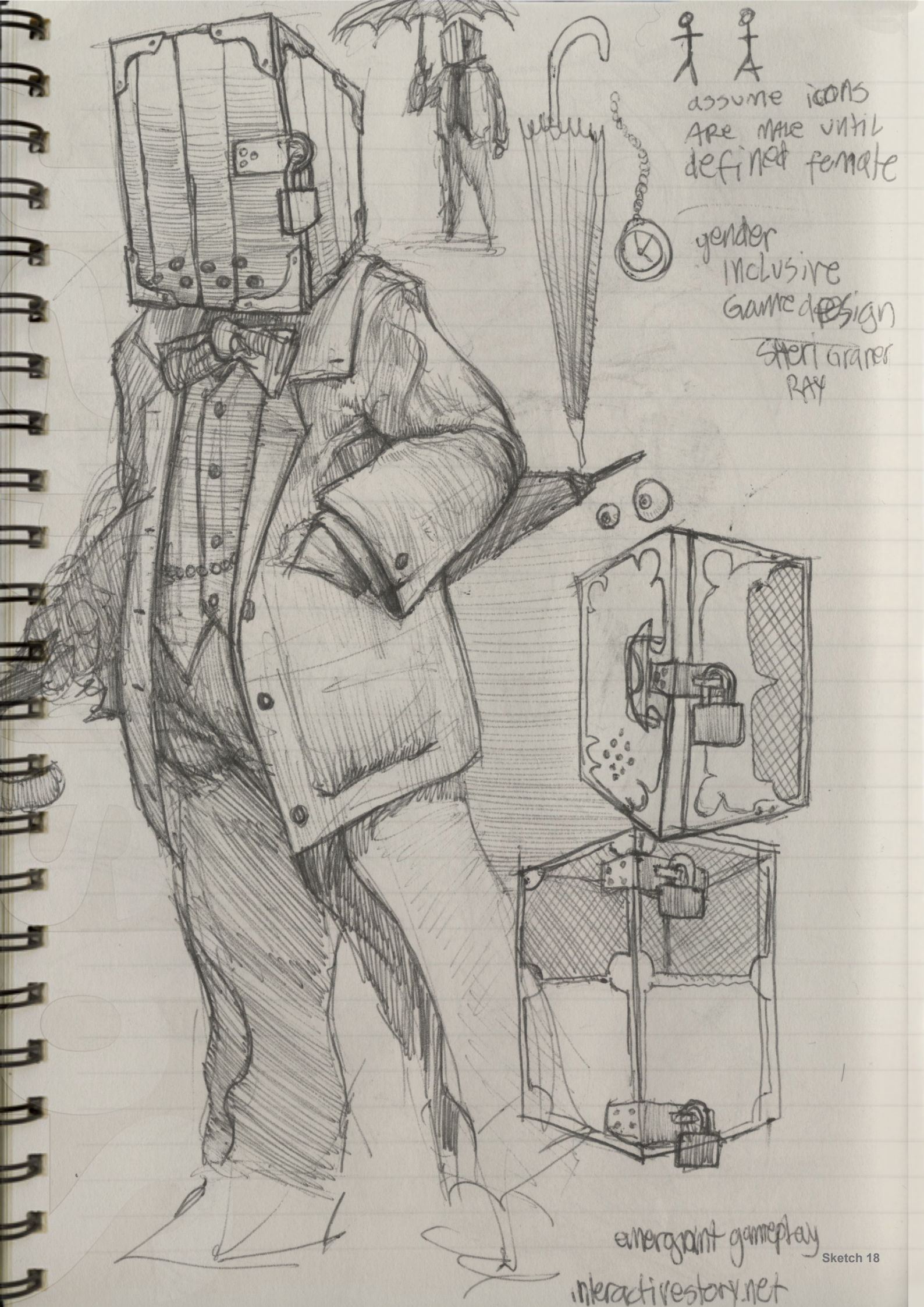
SKETCH 17 [THIS PAGE]

I sometimes like to draw on smaller pages because, in a weird way, it feels like you have more energy to render it more because of the small space it takes up. I tend to buy small sketchbooks now and then, but they get full fast!

SKETCH 18 [RIGHT]

This sketch page was for a character to a modification of Doom 3 I was involved in. The character is supposed to know all the secrets in the game, but be closed in a box. Hiding for the truth? On this page, I tried out different boxes for his head. I was hoping to have this steam-punk feel to the design. I didn't end up making him in 3D due to lack of time. Oh well, next time perhaps!

Sketch 17


assume icons ARE male until defined female
gender inclusive Game design
Sheri Graner RAY
emergent gameplay
interactivestory.net

Sketch 18

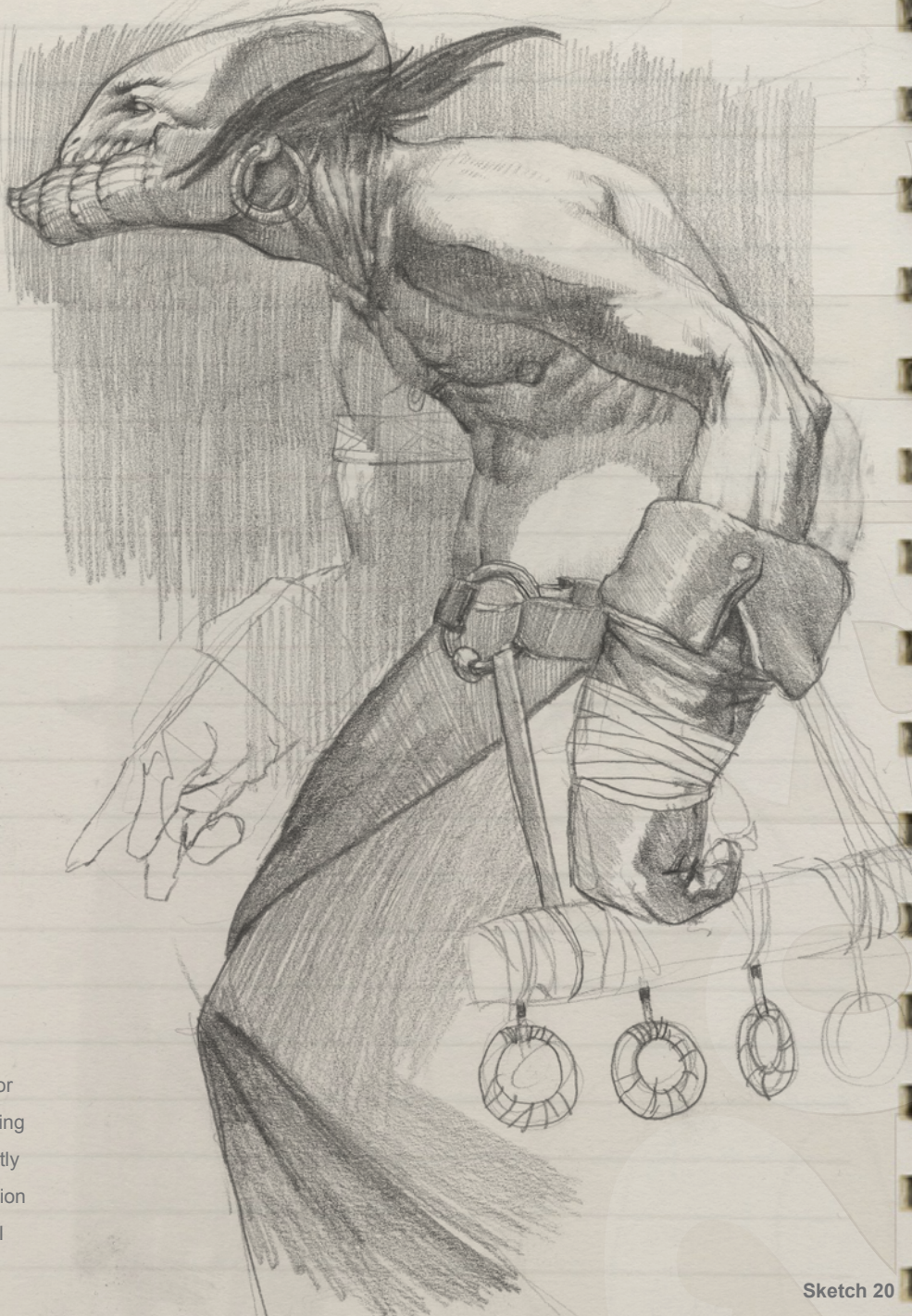


SKETCH 19 [LEFT]

Yet again, I played around with lines and anatomy, exploring different skin textures and length of the limbs. I tend to draw a lot of random things so that I constantly create new forms and shapes for my mind so I can reuse them at any point. I used a ball-point pen as I like the resistance it gives while sliding over a somewhat rough paper surface. It's like music for my ears!



Sketch 19



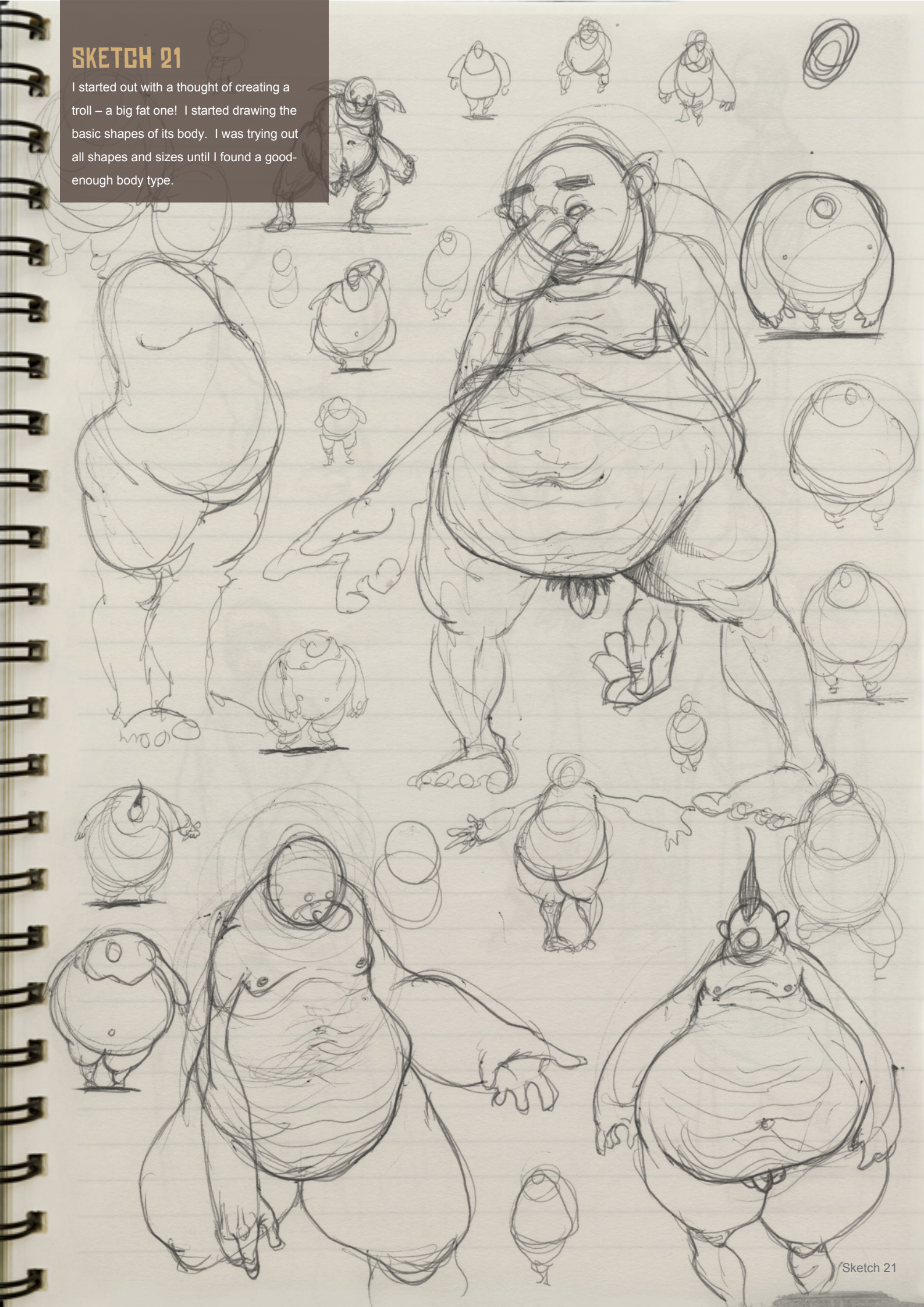
SKETCH 20 [RIGHT]

I saw a drawing on the Internet; some guy had rendered it very nicely with a pen, so it got me thinking of ways to draw a picture. I started out by sketching a character out so that I got a feel for what it was, then I just started rendering by drawing all the lines going in the same direction and slightly rotating the angle to describe the form and direction of certain things. As a rendering technique test, I found it to be a successful attempt!

Sketch 20

SKETCH 21

I started out with a thought of creating a troll – a big fat one! I started drawing the basic shapes of its body. I was trying out all shapes and sizes until I found a good-enough body type.



WITCH TROLL [BOTTOM RIGHT]

I re-drew this on different paper, keeping the body mass that I previously drew and then started to add additional shapes and details. I was trying to create some personality in its pose and face. The focus was definitely on the face at this stage.

WITCH TROLL IN COLOUR

Then I took it into Adobe Photoshop and started to paint on it. I usually just start to paint straight onto the canvas in Photoshop, but this time around I wanted to flesh out the character before I started to paint. I wanted to keep the look and feel of the sketch so I switched back and forth between the sketch and paint to make sure it was translating well enough. I think the end result ended up looking pretty good! A nice witch troll ready to steal your baby, ha ha!



BJORN HURRI

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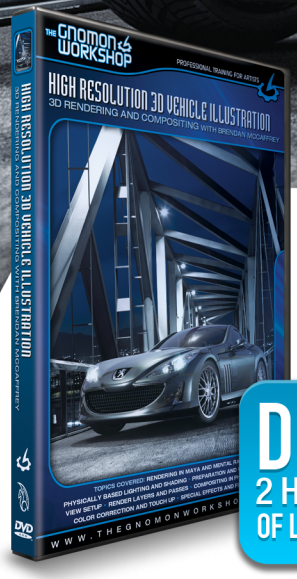
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BERRY TROLL

Bjorn Hurri

http://www.bjornhurri.com/

bjornhurri@hotmail.com

Check out Bjorn's fantastic Sketchbook in this month's issue of 2DArtist!





THE PRISONER

Daniel Ljunggren
http://darylart.com
daniel@darylart.com

Check our an in-depth interview with Daniel in next month's issue of 2DArtist!



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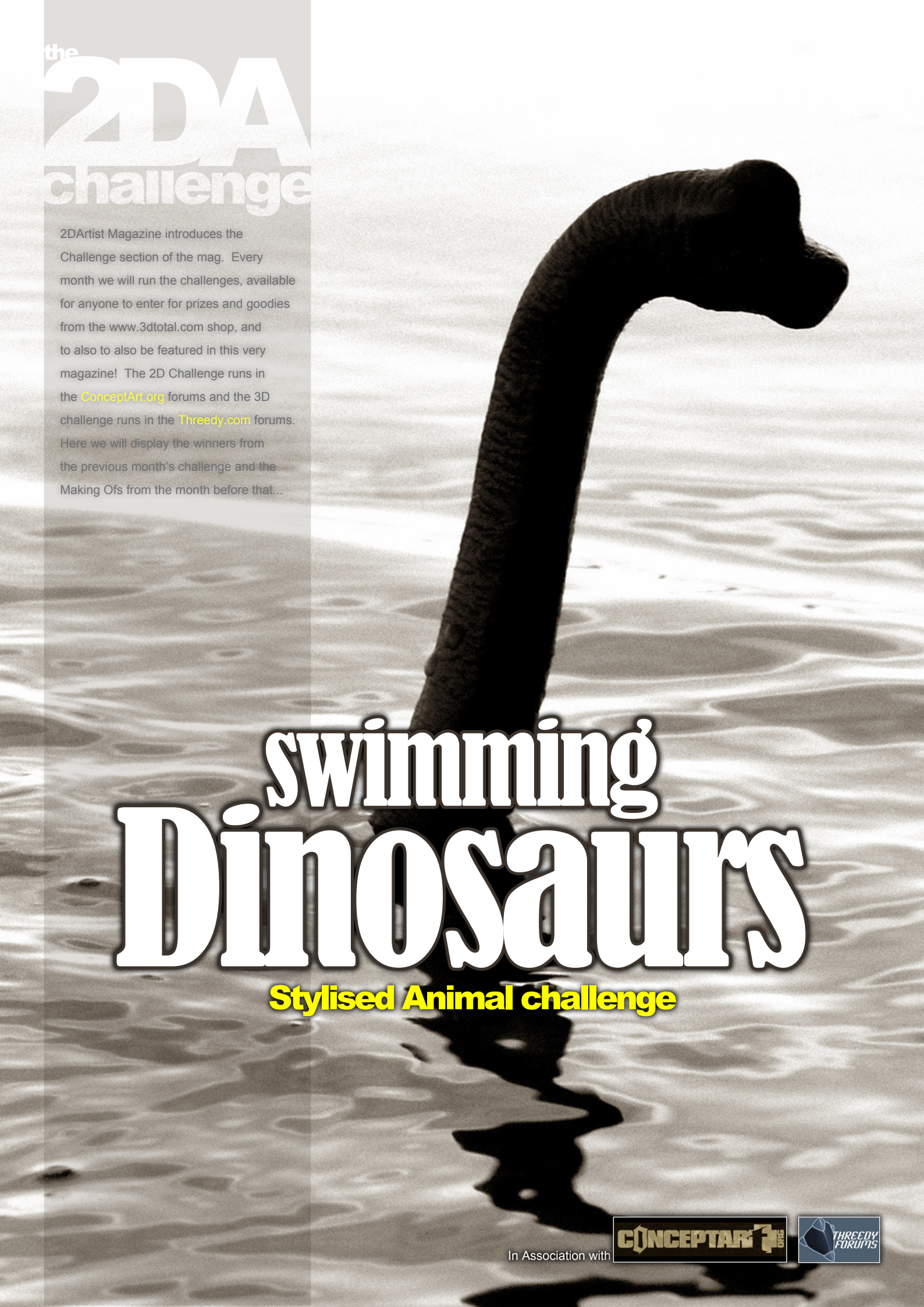
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the 2DA challenge

2DArtist Magazine introduces the Challenge section of the mag. Every month we will run the challenges, available for anyone to enter for prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop, and to also to also be featured in this very magazine! The 2D Challenge runs in the ConceptArt.org forums and the 3D challenge runs in the Threedy.com forums. Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the Making Ofs from the month before that...



swimming Dinosaurs

Stylised Animal challenge

In Association with CONCEPTART.ORG THREEDY FORUMS

Stylised Animal Challenge

Swimming Dinosaur

THE CHALLENGE

Welcome to the Stylised Animal Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select an animal and post some images in the forum thread as reference. All you have to do is create a 2D image of this creature in a stylised/ abstract/cartoon style, whilst keeping your creature instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylised animals, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and Making Ofs that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. If it continues in success, we will try to boost the prizes as much as possible! This month's animal was **Swimming Dinosaurs**. Here you can see the top seven entries, as voted for by the public...

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Funny and humorous entries which break the animal down to its most recognisable components; emphasise these in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised/abstract/cartoon masterpiece! The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 2D render (minor post work



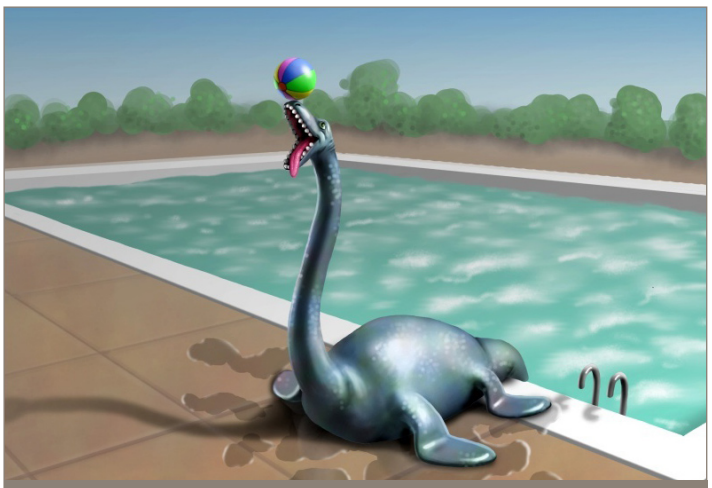
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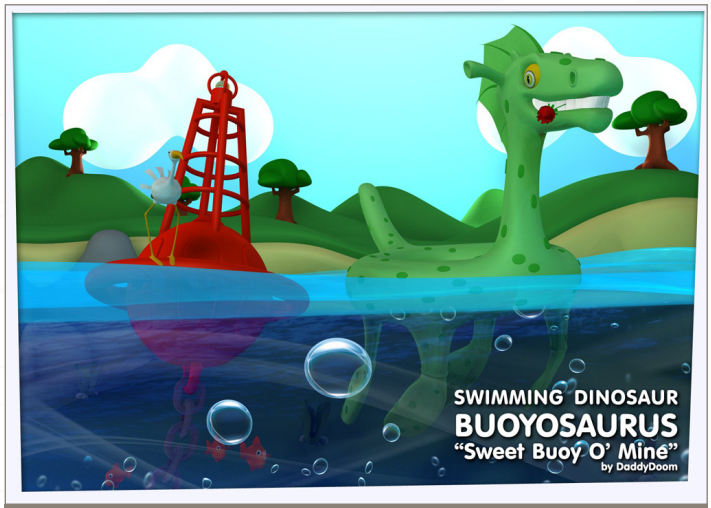


2ND: MONSTERTREE http://www.monstertree.blogspot.com



1ST: CHUCK.MATE http://www.chuckmate.blogspot.com

is OK); it's up to you if you want to have a background or include graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine so if you can create some higher resolution images too, all the better! There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top 3 winners to submit 'Making Of' overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation, different



3RD DADDYDOOM pedroldaniel@gmail.com



2ND JIZRIK jirka_siska@yahoo.com

elements and some brief explanation text of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure and us some quality content! Each competition will start with one main thread, starting with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIPs, give feedback, and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month!

CHALLENGE THREAD

The entire SWIMMING DINOSAUR challenge can be viewed here.

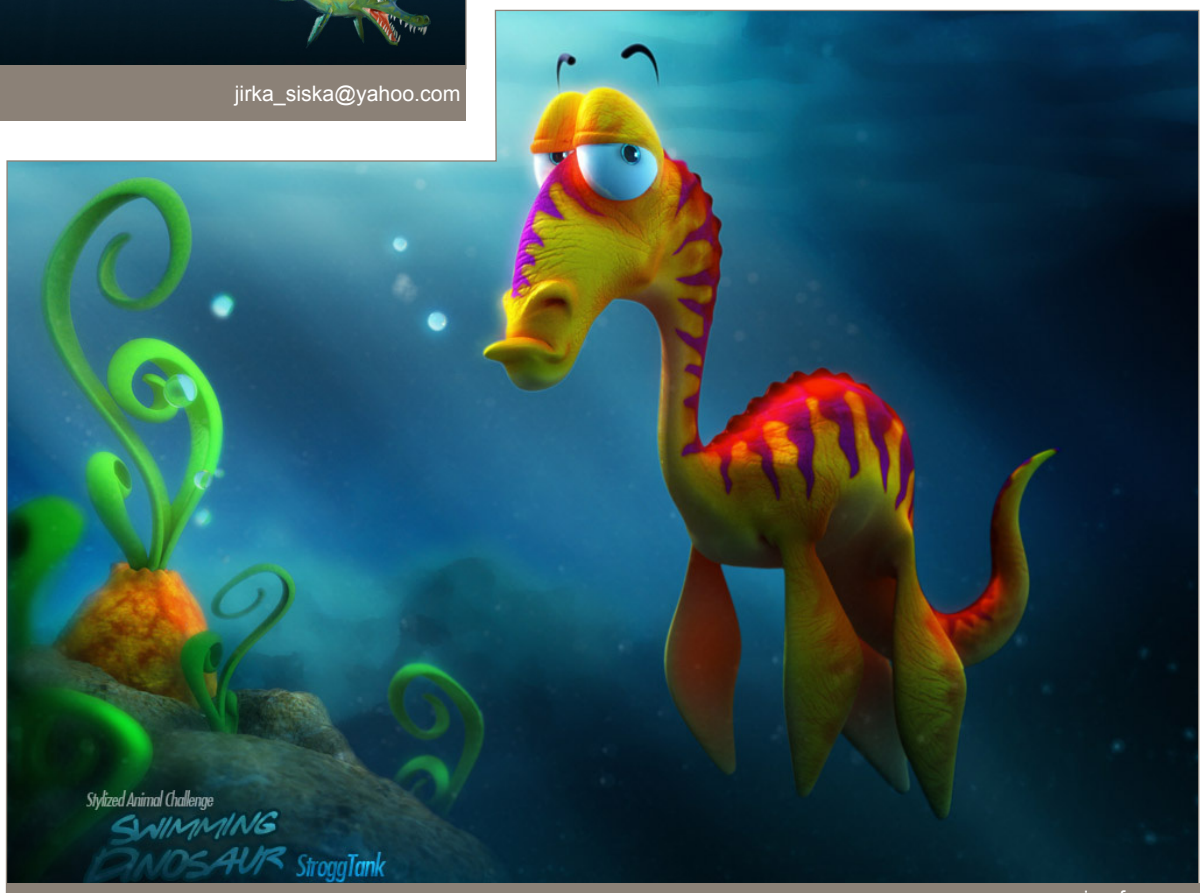
The current challenge at the voting stage is: DRAGONS!

The Current Challenge taking place is: 'BULL IN A CHINA SHOP'

To join the next challenge, or to view previous and/or current entries, please visit: www.conceptart.org
Or, for the 3D Challenge, please visit: www.threedy.com
Or contact: lynette@zoopublishing.com

3D CHALLENGE

Here are last month's top entries from the 3D Challenge!



1ST STROGGTANK www.zigrafus.com mxstrogg_tank@hotmail.com



MAKING OFS

Here are the Making Ofs from last month's top 3 winning entries...

3RD: AB4185

CONCEPT

Hey guys and gals! First thing I thought of for the Carnivore Challenge was the usual suspects: T-Rex, raptor, etc. But I wanted to get my head outside the box, so I went with the Dimetrodon. In the end though, no matter what subject I ended up with, I was sure that I wanted the dino to look cheeky and confident.

In the initial sketch (**Fig01**) I took a little artistic license, since the artist reps of Dimetrodon's over the years have been pretty varied. In the end I took a little inspiration from the three "bearded dragons" we had in a tank as pets when we were kids (I live in Australia so lizards aren't hard to come by!).

COLOUR

I decided on a red brown (**Fig03**) and blocked in some rough colour with a little texture. After this I ended up doing what I always seem to end up doing, and that was detailing it in full, piece by piece. But since I had a very clear image in my mind I wasn't too concerned about the need to re-work things.



Fig01



Fig02

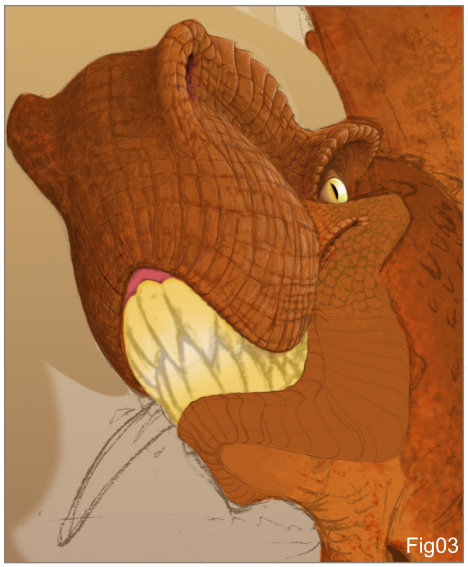


Fig03


Fig04


Fig05


Fig06

Fig03, Fig04, Fig05 and **Fig06** are the best examples I managed to save of how I detailed the scales. I laid down a very cracked skin in a sketchy form, blocking in the large scales roughly with a dark brown and then laying down a little highlight to the centres. Then, darkening the seams between and adding highlights to emphasise some depth, it ended up becoming very time-consuming, which wasn't a good thing with the amount of freelance stuff I was trying to do at the time.

Frankly, I wouldn't suggest getting into the habit of detailing early on as it's stuffed up more then a few pictures for me. This process pretty much followed through from head to tail, with the exception of the arms which I ended up doing with a bit more variety. They ended up being a bit more varied in scales (**Fig07** and **Fig08**) (probably for my own sanity as the process had become a little stagnant!). I added some large defensive plating on his lower arms and plated up the fingers a bit more to make them seem chunkier. After this, I added some spikes to the back of his neck and moved on to the "fin".

The "fin" (**Fig09**), however, ended up more scaled then I had planned, and if I were to go back I would defiantly stick closer to the original sketch for this part. But then hindsight is a beautiful thing isn't it?! Live and learn!

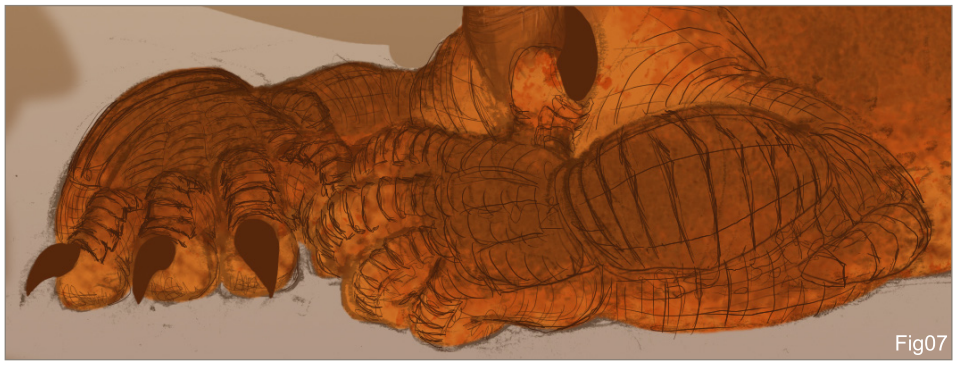

Fig07


Fig08


Fig09


Fig10



With little more then a few hours left, and work piling up behind, with this last ditch effort to make the deadline I finally scaled up the back leg, similar to the front ones, and added in the teeth and claws (**Fig10**).

My biggest regret is that I wasn't able to throw in a back ground, but hopefully I got the character of this man-eater across! In any case, it was a fun challenge and just what I need to do to get my head above less interesting work. I hope you like and have got something out of this tutorial, guys!

Cheers!

ANDREW BERENDS

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.hawkfishmedia.com.au

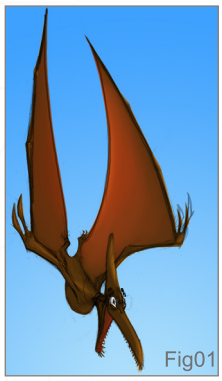
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2ND: SCARYPOTATO

After deciding on the type of pose to use for this month's theme, I scanned it into Photoshop and quickly dropped some colours into it (**Fig01**).

My initial sketch had the fellow with a big white scarf and aviator goggles, because I really wanted to play up the goofy side of him, but the goggles obscured his eyes too much and in the end I decided to leave him stark naked. My next step was to figure out a light source direction, and with the outstretched wings it seemed like a fun idea to have the light off to the side and a little behind, to play around with the idea of slightly opaque skin (**Fig02**).


Fig01

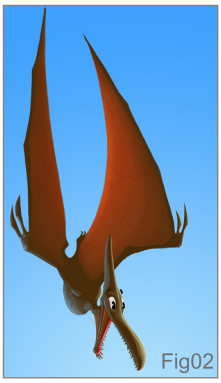

Fig02

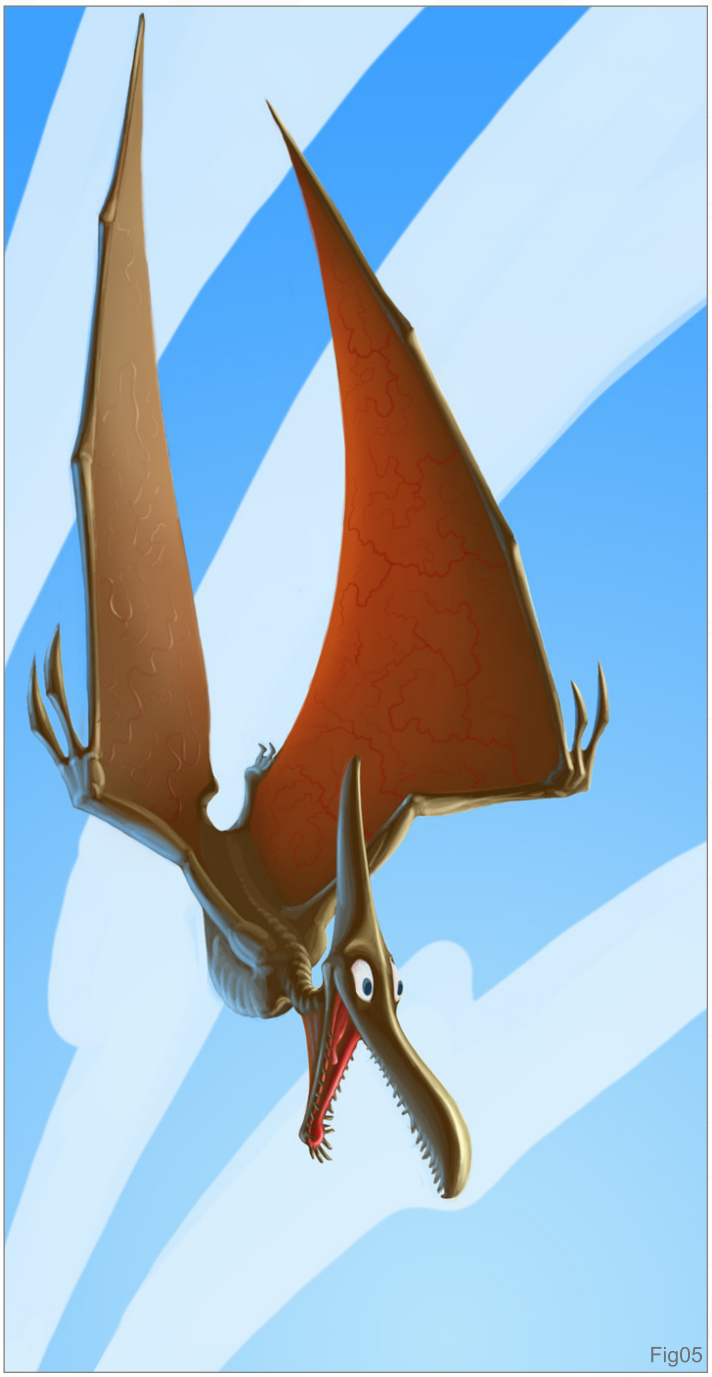

Fig03


Fig04

With his bulging eyes, I wanted an old-fashioned animation look to them, and was kind of thinking about him being like the old WB cartoon character in personality and style. So I started refining the image a little (**Fig03** and **Fig04**), fleshing him out with some highlights along the wing, and trying to pump up the veins in the 'wing flaps'. I also changed his pupils because they were too stylised and flat for what I was hoping to do with the body. I should explain that, for the large highlights on the wing, I tended to use a very large round brush with 0% hardness, and also set the airbrush setting on with a fairly low percentage to build up the intensity slowly.

With the back lighting part, I simply chose a highly saturated and more reddish colour than the rest of the body to make it feel like you're seeing the light through the skin. The dino was starting to get there, but then the


Fig06


Fig05

background started bothering me as it was too plain. I was still thinking about the old cartoons that I love so much, and so went with some really stylized and cartoony cloud shapes (**Fig05**).

The cloud angle was set to make it look like the Pterodactyl was screaming down towards earth, and I tried placing them so that they helped frame everything nicely (with the 'wing tips' and beak in front of the clouds to make them stand out). Still, more highlights were added as well, as the reflection from the sky was made more apparent.

Things were coming together, so I decided to try my hand at adding some textures with a brush other than the standard round one! I used a brush



Fig07

with a scattering pattern and quickly run up and down the body with two colours: one for light and one for sky. I also worked on bringing out the eyes, since I wanted them to really stand out as one of his most striking features (**Fig06**).

In the next image (**Fig07**), I added some little rubbery/leathery stress points along the skin of his wings to make them feel a little more like all that skin was actually attached to the bones somehow. I also applied a motion blur filter to the clouds, running in the direction that the 'dino bird' is flying, to give it a sense of motion and to put more focus on the shapes in the foreground. At this point, I was thinking that it was pretty much done, but something seemed to be missing... After a little thought, I realised that I had forgotten all about the nostrils! I dropped them in and considered it done. There you have it! My thought processes for this month's carnivorous dinosaur!



RYAN SLATER

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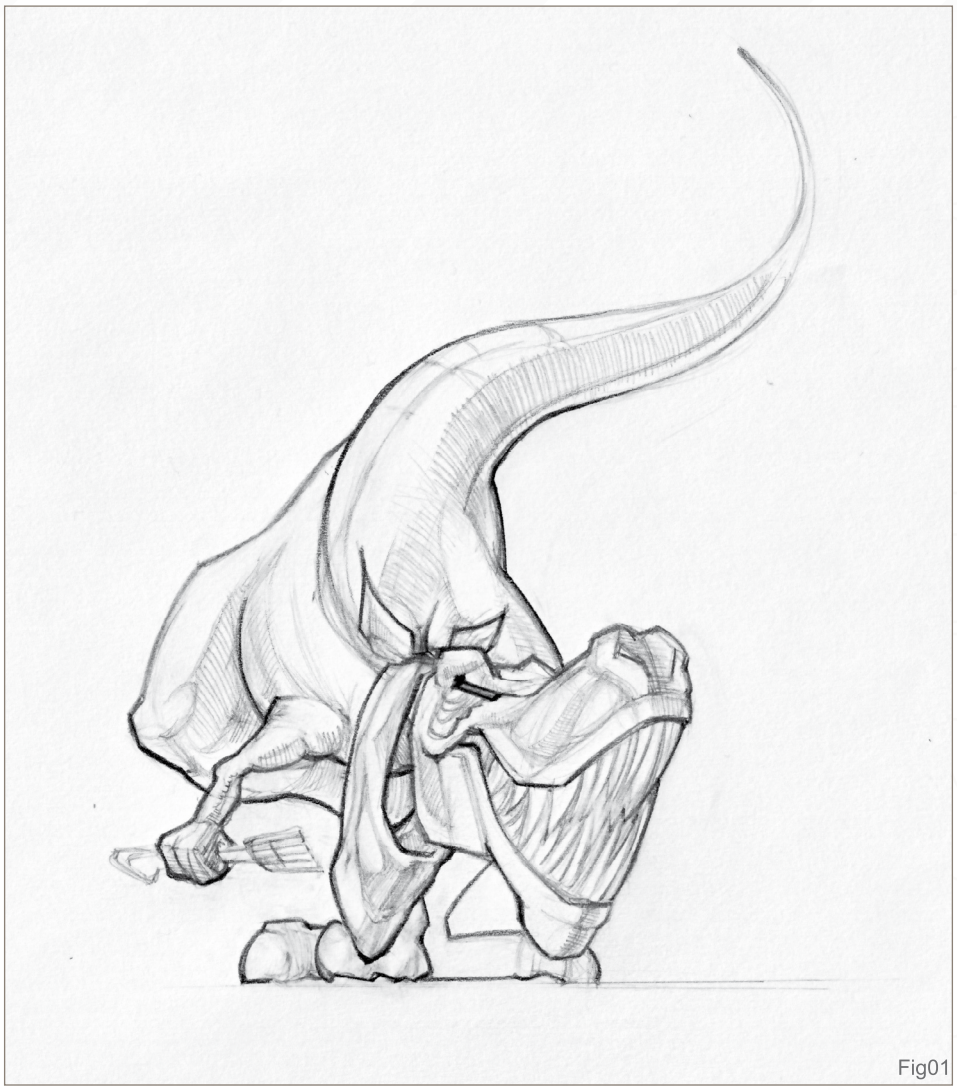
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IDEA

Dinos are dead! That we all know, sure. But there is another thing, too: dinos are death incarnated; dinos are scary; dinos are walking nightmares with large behemoths of muscle, teeth and hunger – a terror to behold, really! That was the basic concept I wanted to represent on the one hand. On the other hand, I am a man with a fun side too, so I also wanted to add a comic element, which you can see from the result.

SKETCH

First of all I defined the character. I added exaggerated teeth, an evil look and some movement to underline the aggression inherent in dinos. This move gave a dynamic composition to the picture. I worked with pencil on paper, focusing on the character as the main part of my composition, leaving the background to the digital stage. When I was satisfied with my sketch, I scanned it (**Fig01**).


Fig01

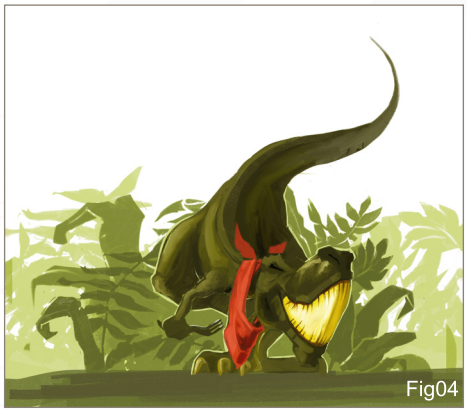
COLOUR SKETCH

I started the work in ArtRage2. On a separate layer, I used my scan as a reference. First I blocked in the main form, gave some lighting and painted some background elements (**Fig02**). For the background, I used stencils (which works like an alpha channel in Photoshop (**Fig03**)), blocked in the shape and then moved and scaled these stencils and painted over them.

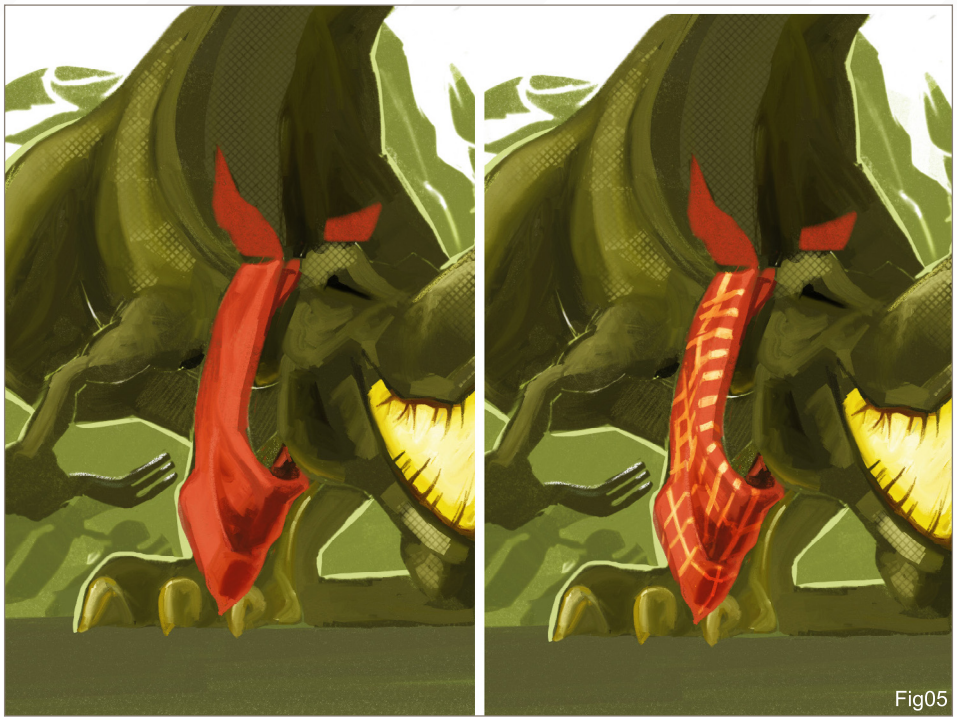

Fig02


Fig03

I wanted a 'rough-and-ready' sketchy feeling. My first plan was to create a typography

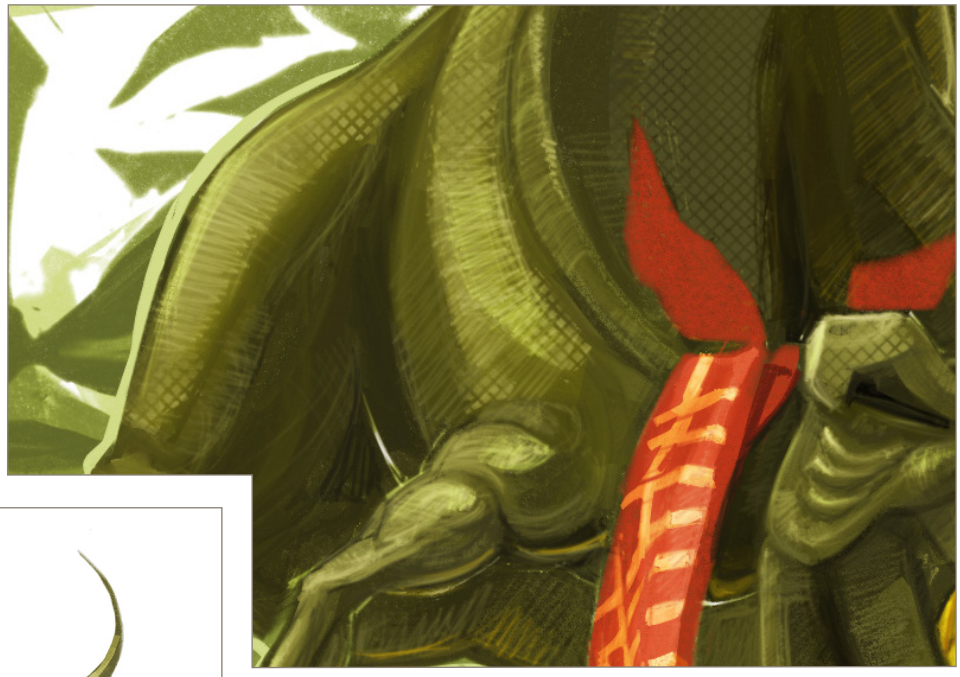

Fig04

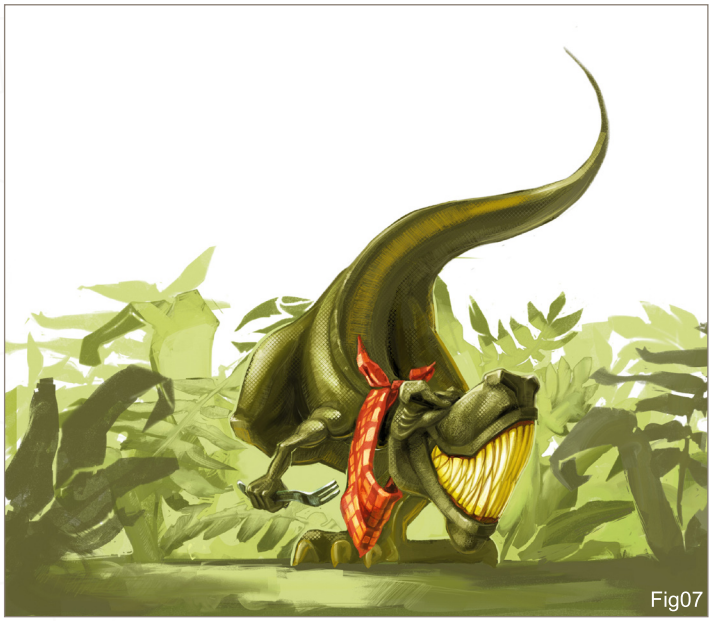
supported illustration, so I left a big white empty space on the upper part of the picture. I continued working on the background and the character, and I made another stencil for the background on another layer with a darker colour to give more detail (**Fig04**). I also painted some texture onto the skin, choosing different paper settings. My original plan of the red neckerchief was not so good an idea – after all, my dino looked like a scout boy, so I painted white strokes on it, onto an Overlay layer, to create sort of a dish cloth effect (**Fig05**).


Fig05

DETAILING

I started the detailing with the Pencil tool on a separate layer. In parallel, I worked with the Paint Roller tool to paint larger areas (textures and lights) on my basic dino layer. Pencil was used to add more details to these patches (**Fig06**).




Fig07

I continued developing the background and played with the same stencils as before, and re-thought the elements and colours (**Fig07**). I wanted to put a cool typography design on the left upper side, with the title “Where are my little friends?” along with sets of scared and shaking little eyes under the bushes, but I did not have enough time to work on this. So I re-considered the composition and added some stencils to the background, then painted over them.

I wasn’t so satisfied with the background and lighting. On the ConceptArt.org forum, there were some good suggestions, but I did not have the time to incorporate them with the painting, so maybe next time!



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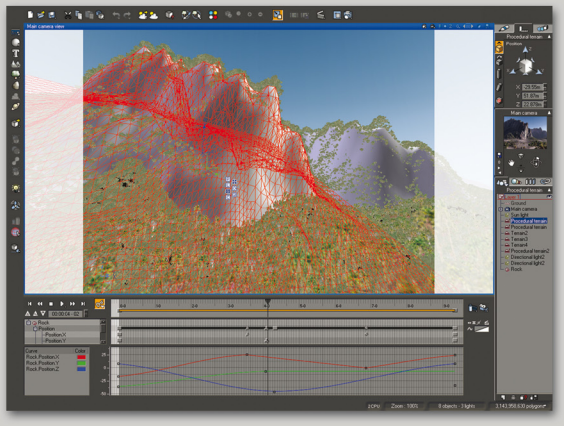
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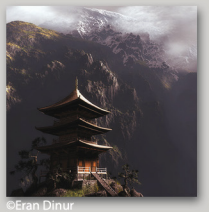


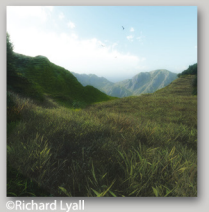


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"I like this description because it leaves plenty of room for interpretation. So that the painting can leave room for interpretation. too..."



Bente Schlick teaches us, step by step, how to paint a beautiful misty morning scene in Photoshop...

By Bente Schlick

Misty Morning

MISTY MORNING

This painting is titled "**Dagsbrún**", and is based on a story:

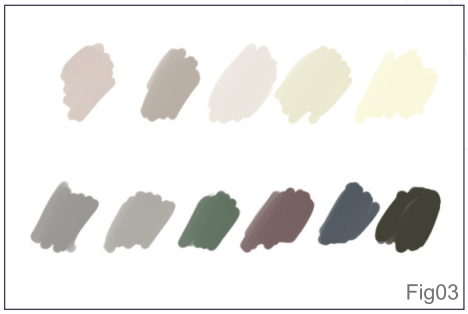
"Sometimes Dagsbrún emerges as a beautiful woman clad in a white gown, sometimes as a swarm of birds... And sometimes she's just a shimmer on some dew drops or the rising sun in the distance. She often emerges on misty mornings on glades collecting the last dew drops from the culms."

I like this description because it leaves plenty of room for interpretation, so that the painting can leave room for interpretation, too.

I'll start with the background and will later add the figure, based on this sketch, and pose the model (**Fig01**). The sketch for the face was just an idea, so we'll see how this turns out later (**Fig02**).


Fig01


Fig02


Fig03

First of all, I select the colours I want to use for the painting. Because I want to paint a misty morning scene, I will take dim and soft colours. The sun should rise in the background, so I'll take a bright yellow, a violet and a pink, and mix them together to get a soft and warm colour for the sunrise. For the foreground, where I'll place the figure, I choose brown, grey, blue and green colours (therefore, cold tones) (**Fig03**).



Fig04


Fig05

COMPOSITION

STEP ONE: I paint with a hard round brush which paints opaquely or transparently, depending on the pressure applied to the pen. I then take an airbrush-like brush to smudge over

some painted areas, to give the painting a soft impression overall (**Fig04** and **Fig05**).

STEP 2: I start painting light grey-ish grass in the middle of the scene, still using the two before-mentioned brushes for painting and smudging. I also start to paint the shadow of a tree on the left side of the painting (**Fig06**).

STEP 3: I amend some things now and start adding more detail. I also darken some areas in the painting (**Fig07**).

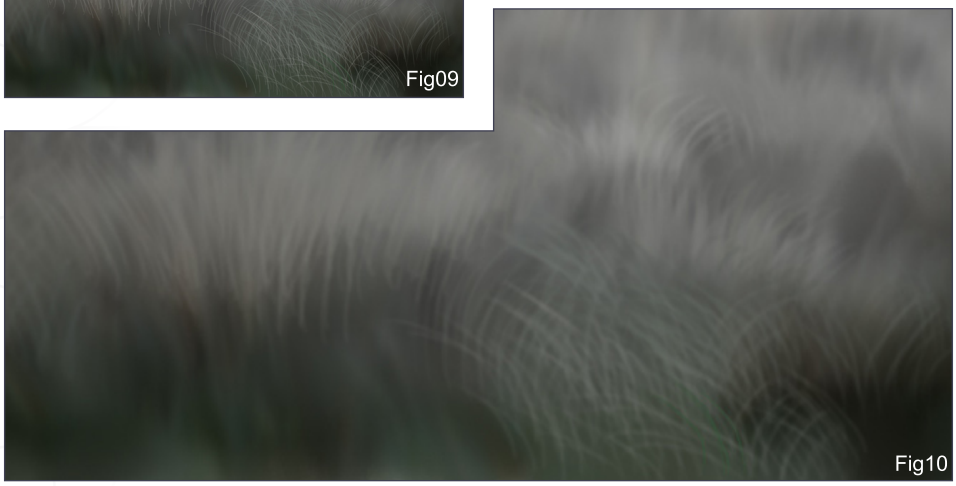
We now have a good basis to go into more detail, so we can start to painting the grass. **Remember:** grass does not grow in one direction and has several different shades of colour. I choose dim green, brown and blue colours for my painting. I paint just a small area of grass on one layer and then take a new layer. By doing this, I have better control over them and can simply delete a specific area if I don't like it, or I can move it to another place if I want. Another thing is that I can duplicate a single grass culm layer and place it slightly shifted above the first grass culm layer, therefore saving the need to draw every single piece of grass. Although, I'll have to paint many, many grass culms for this painting, I guess!


Fig06


Fig07


Fig08


Fig09


Fig10

You can also duplicate a particular grass culm layer then flip it horizontally (Edit > Transform) and/or resize, scale and distort it (Move tool). Just play around a bit and see how it looks (also try out the different blending modes!) (**Fig08** and **Fig09**).

I'll then use the Gaussian Blur filter (Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur) to deaden the contours a little. Play around with different values until you find what you like, which will depend on the foreground and background and what kind of depth effect you want to achieve in your own painting (**Fig10**).

This bit is always the busiest part: painting strands of grass (patience is the key!). I therefore continually blend new grass culm layers, blur them a little more or less and/or use a soft smudge brush, and often put darker grass culms above lighter ones to achieve depth, and so on and so forth. To get a feeling of how the grass of a grassland looks, it's a good idea to look for some reference material, either in life or on the Internet for speed (**Fig11** and **Fig12**).

It looks better now, doesn't it? I've also made the tree on the left side more visible, using the same technique as I used for the grass: first I painted it with a normal edged brush and then blurred the layer. I then duplicated the layer and inserted it again, a little shifted.

When happy to do so, I can merge all the grass culm layers into a single layer. I'll keep the newly formed grass culm layer and the original background layer on separate layers, so I can simply change areas (for example the darkness) without brushing over the grass culms (**Fig13**).

I'm now at the point where I can add the figure, although I'll work on the background again at the end (more grass culms and dew drops in more detail), but it was important for me to create a certain atmosphere first.

I decide to change the Color Balance here to make the painting more blueish. I think this colour scheme better presents the magical background of the painting (**Fig14**).

For the figure, I take the before-mentioned brushes for painting and smudging. I choose bright – but not too bright – tones (never use



Fig11


Fig12



Fig13

a pure/clean white!) for the dress, to give the figure a certain degree of transparency. I also want to show that Dagsbrún is a part of nature and that you can never know for sure what she really is, whether just fog, a swarm of birds or a person (**Fig15** and **Fig16**).

I also study photos of flying birds and paint them very opaquely and roughly. It's not important to go into too much detail here, as the human eye completes certain areas automatically (**Fig17**).

I now want to make the birds look more photorealistic and less painterly. Besides, they're just too rough for the whole painting at the moment! To do this, I take the smudge brush to give them a smoother appearance. I brush over them softly, at some points more and at some points less. I then go over them again with a normal brush until I like the result. It's just a matter of practice (**Fig18** and **Fig19**).

At this point I realised that I didn't like the composition any more; the birds where much too central and too close together. Other things that bothered me were the dress and the veil. It all looked too stiff and boring and too similar to a wedding gown. I decided that more movement was needed to clarify that this wasn't just some girl standing on some field, but much more something like a ghostly creature – something


Fig14


Fig15


Fig16

that was there and wasn't there at the same time, something that could disappear the very next moment. I therefore add more colours from the background to the dress, like the one of the rising sun on the left side of the figure, to make the figure appear more like a part of the whole painting (**Fig20**).

The skin tone is similar to the background, but the figure is turned away from the sun, so I can take cold blue and violet tones for the skin so that it is in some way reminiscent of porcelain. For dark areas, for example


Fig17

Fig19


Fig20


Fig18

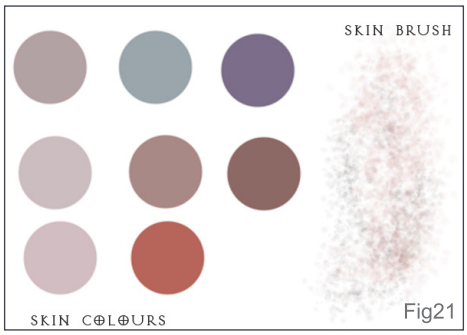
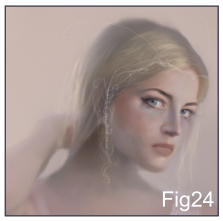


Fig21


Fig22


Fig25


Fig23


Fig24

around the eyes and the chin, I take a dark violet, and for highlights I take a light blue-green. For the main colour, I mix blue, violet and red tones. I take a sparkled skin brush, which I normally use for pores and things like that, to make the edges of the face smoother. I then go over with the smudge brush again. Since I don't want the character to look as if it was just superimposed on the picture, I take the background colour which is immediately next to the respective part of the body, and brush over it. This gives the picture a certain three-dimensional feeling (**Fig21, Fig22, Fig23, Fig24** and **Fig25**).

Finally, one can observe that I started with a much darker skin tone which, step by step, became brighter. It's more effective to work from dark to bright, whether you want to paint skin tones or backgrounds or anything else.

I can now concentrate on the decoration of the dress. There is a simple trick to create great

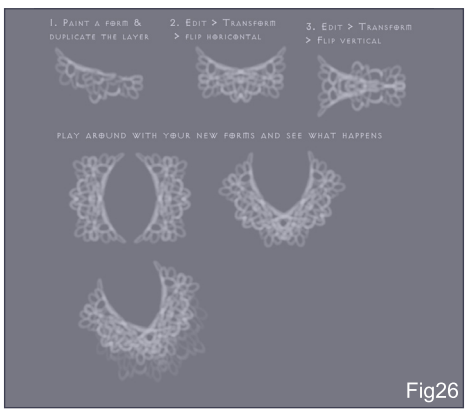
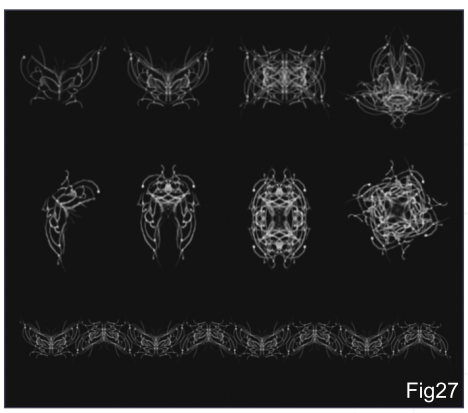


Fig26


Fig27

symmetrical decoration without painting for hours. Simply start with a simple ornamental form, set a few highlights at some positions (apply more or less pressure to the pen) and then duplicate the layer and flip it horizontally or vertically, or in whatever direction you like (sounds familiar, doesn't it?)

The different forms are very interesting and inspiring (as you can see, one of them looks like a beetle!). You can do the same thing with your new form again and again and see what happens. Duplicate, flip, switch or blur it – simply try something new! And let me know


Fig28


Fig29


Fig31


Fig30

when you do, as I would really enjoy seeing some results (**Fig26** and **Fig27**). Several ornamental decorations for the upper part of the dress can be seen in **Fig28** and **Fig29**.

At the end, I change the Color Balance again and make the painting a little more blueish. I also paint over some areas of the dress and skin tones with a bright blue, to give the whole image a more magical and less boring look. I add some decoration to the bottom part of the dress, but not too much, and I decide the dress has enough decoration in the upper part (**Fig30, Fig31** and **Fig32**).

BENTE SCHLICK

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Fig32



ELEMENTS

Digital Painting Downloadable Tutorial Series

Introduction:

The 'elements' series is a 70 page guide to 2D Digital painting and can be followed in most software packages supporting paintbrushes and layers. With in this downloadable PDF E-Book we have choosen some of the most used aspects of digital painting and asked 2 or 3 professional artists to cover a specific theme or 'element', resulting in 2 or 3 different styles and techniques which can be viewed side by side.

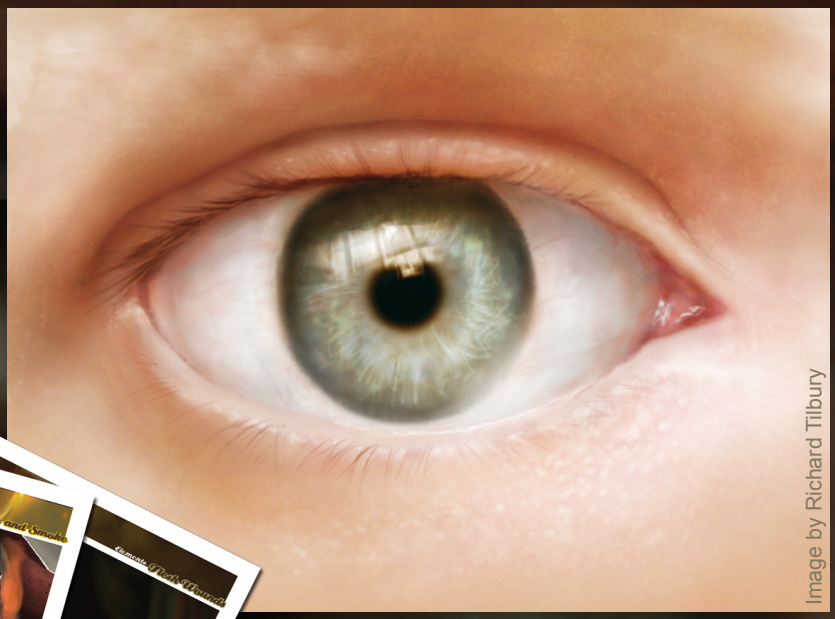


Image by Richard Tilbury





Image by Chris Thung

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Chapter 1: Painting Eyes
Chapter 2: Painting Fabric
Chapter 3: Painting Fire & Smoke
Chapter 4: Painting Flesh Wounds
Chapter 5: Painting Fur & Hair

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Speed Painting

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. We've asked two artists this month to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, Emrah Elmasli and Richard Tilbury, tackle the topic:

THE SLAVE CARAVAN CROSSED THE DESERT

EMRAH ELMASLI

CREATED IN

Photoshop CS3

INTRODUCTION

Hi everyone! This month's speed painting topic is "The Slave Caravan Crossed the Desert". So we have a good excuse to paint a cool environment! I didn't have anything in mind this time; I wanted it to be a random one. There will eventually be a desert, but the rest is a mystery for me as well. So, let's start…

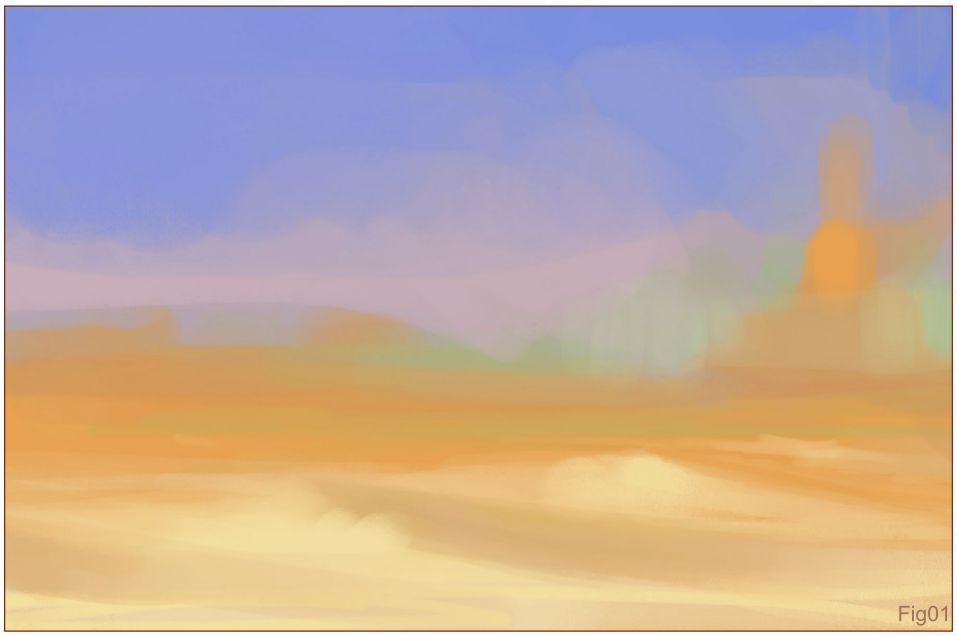
STEP 1

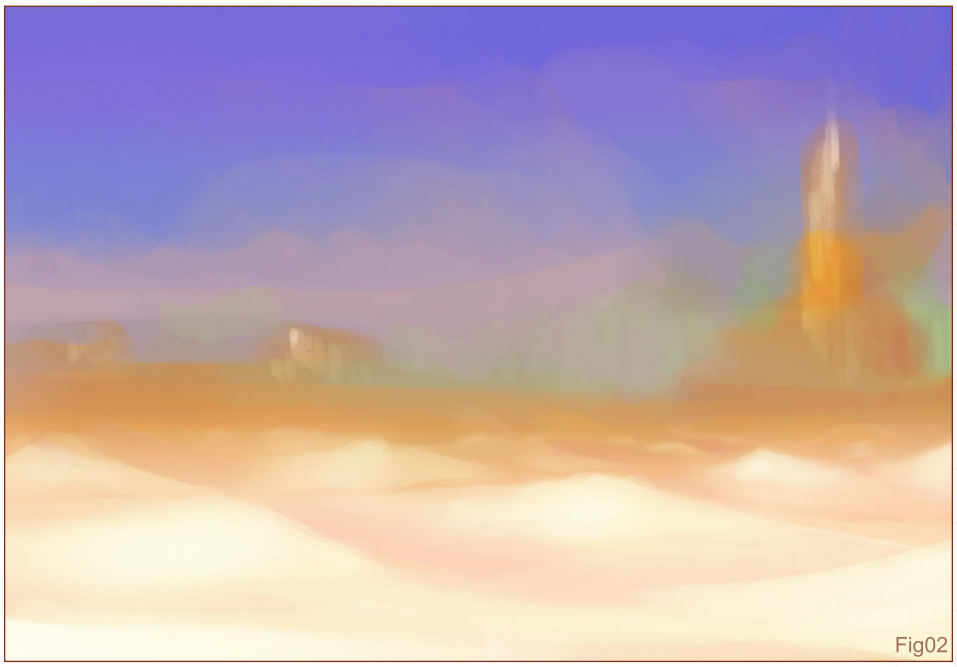
I don't know how long it's going to take this time, but I want to keep it short. Let's say 2 hours maximum!

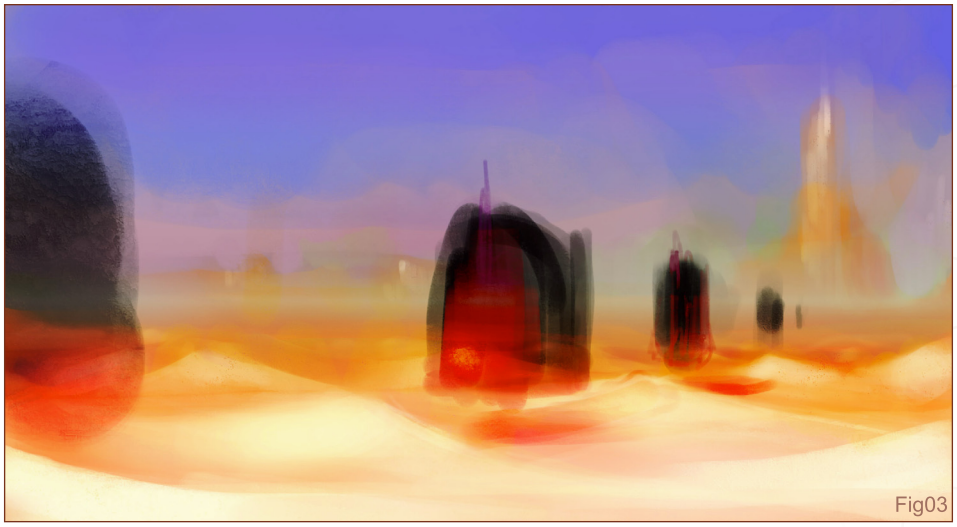
Anyway, the software I'm going to use is Photoshop CS3, again. The canvas size is 2200x1200 pixels, again. Let's start blocking the colours in. I generally use a textured round brush for this step. I paint with fast brushstrokes until I get a nice mixture of warm and cold colours. It soon starts to look like dunes in daylight (**Fig01**).

STEP 2

I open a new layer and set it to "Screen" from the blending mode tab. Then I start to paint in some light on the foreground. I want some strong lighting there, as if it's under a very bright sun. Just using orange and yellow would be boring, so I use purple and pink to achieve some richness in the colours. I apply these colours by opening a new "Overlay" layer, so I can blend them in really nicely (**Fig02**).

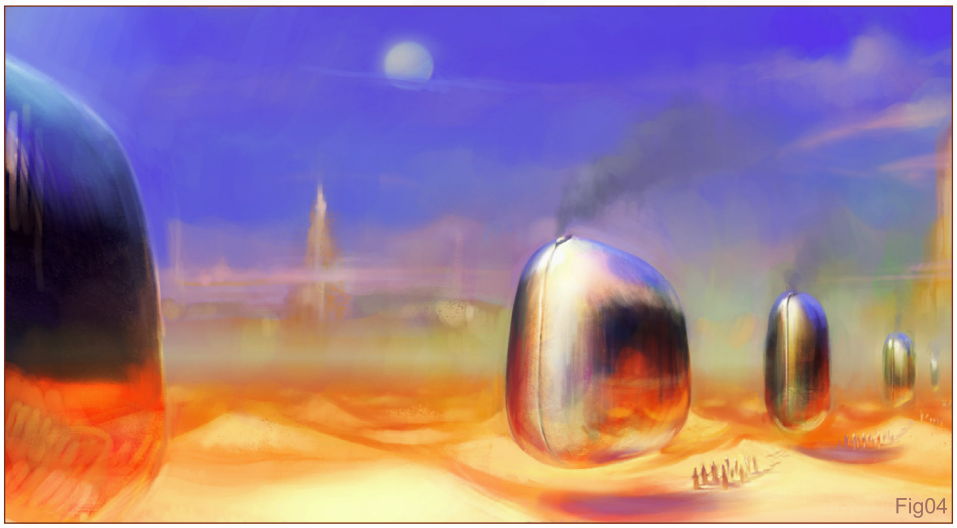

Fig01


Fig02


Fig03

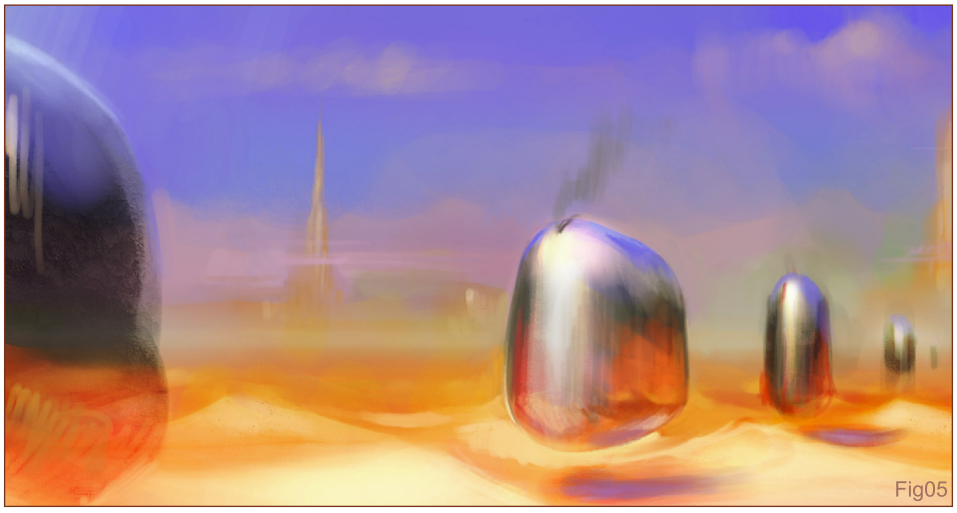
STEP 3

Okay, so what if I add some hovering vehicles in the scene? Sounds like a nice plan... but what kind of vehicles? I want to keep them simple, so let's paint some chrome, toaster-like caravans. Well, maybe they won't look like *actual* toasters but hey, they're my caravans! Just some quick brushstrokes on a new "Colour Burn" layer will do the trick. Some nice silhouettes of the vehicles (**Fig03**).


Fig04

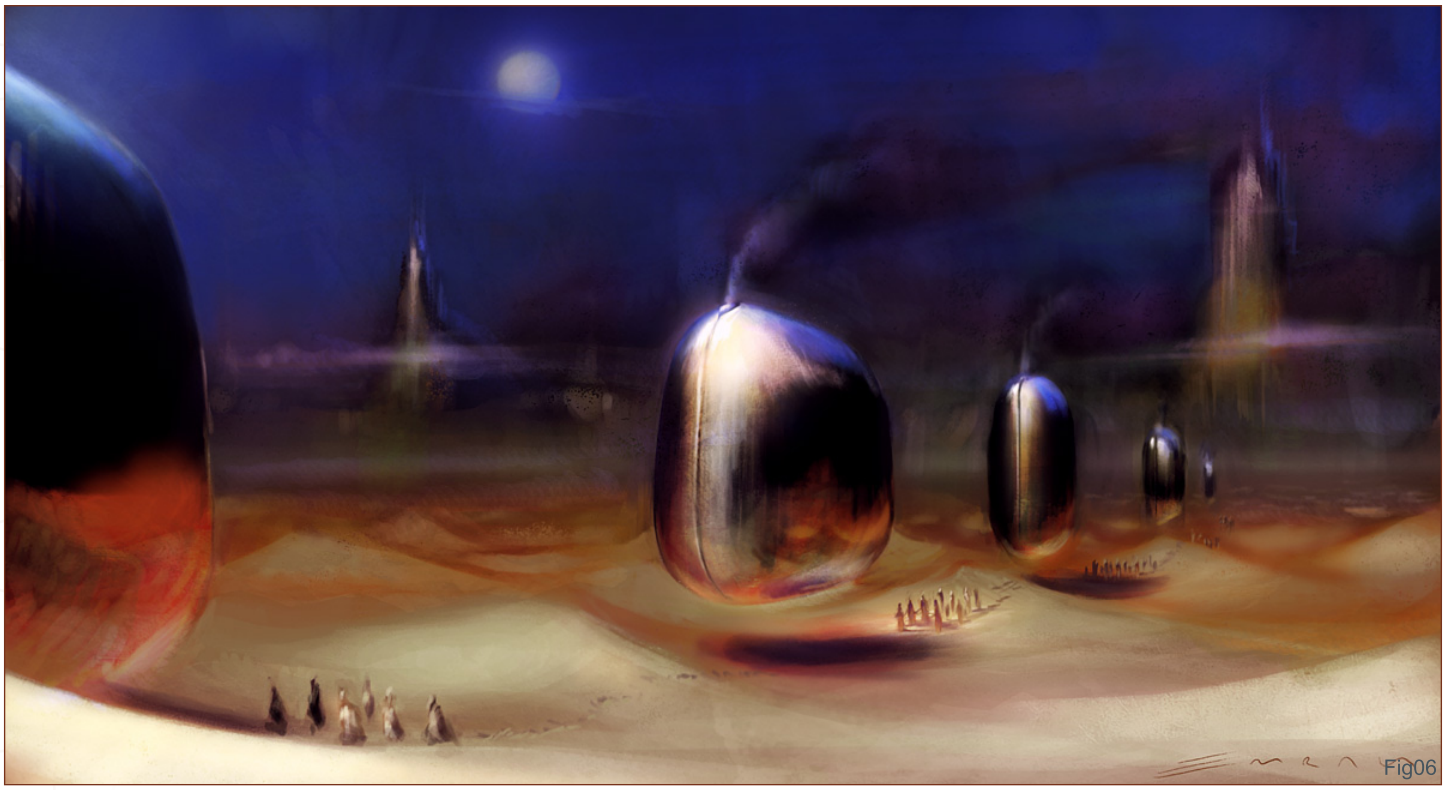
STEP 4

Now, I'll try to give some form to these boys. A fair amount of bouncing light from the environment would be nice, to achieve a chrome look. I continue painting on a new layer until I'm happy with it (**Fig04**).


Fig05

STEP 5

Well, I'm not happy yet so I'll continue to detail the painting: some clouds in the background; a nice green mist, maybe? A cool-looking distant planet is a good idea, too! Wait, what am I missing here? Oh yeah, the slaves of course! Let's paint in some poor slaves under the caravans, walking on the blazing dunes of hell.


Fig06

Just a few little touches with a simple brush will do (**Fig05**).

FINAL

You know what? I don't like the result! I think I want a night scene instead of a day scene. So, I duplicate the canvas and flatten it. Then I go to Image > Adjustments > Exposure and I tweak the colours until I achieve this look on the final image. I also make some slight touches to achieve a textured look – and that's it! Here's our final scene. I hope you like it! (**Fig06**)

Thank you for reading!



EMRAH ELMASLI

For more from this artist visit:
www.partycule.com
Or contact:
emrah@partycule.com



RICHARD TILBURY

CREATED IN

Photoshop CS3

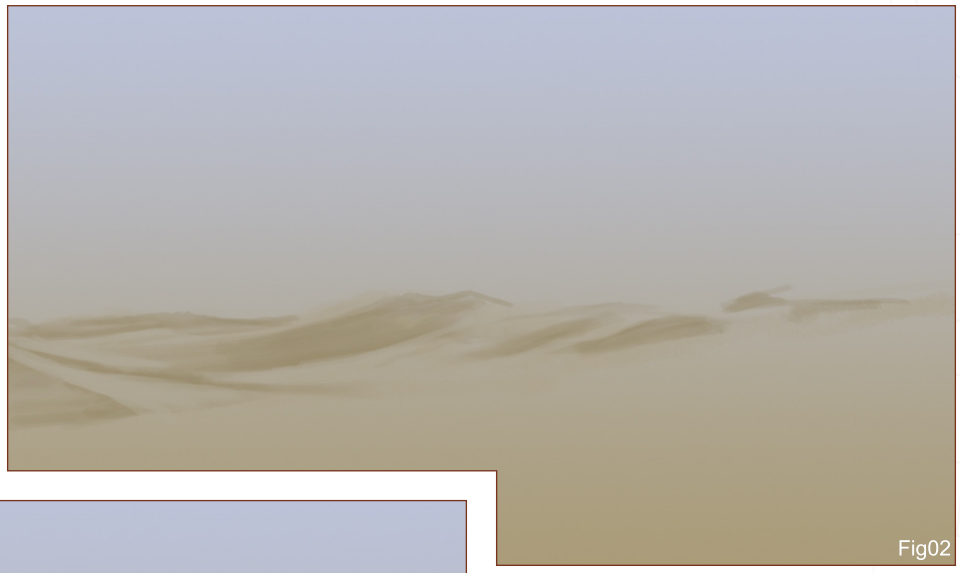
INTRODUCTION

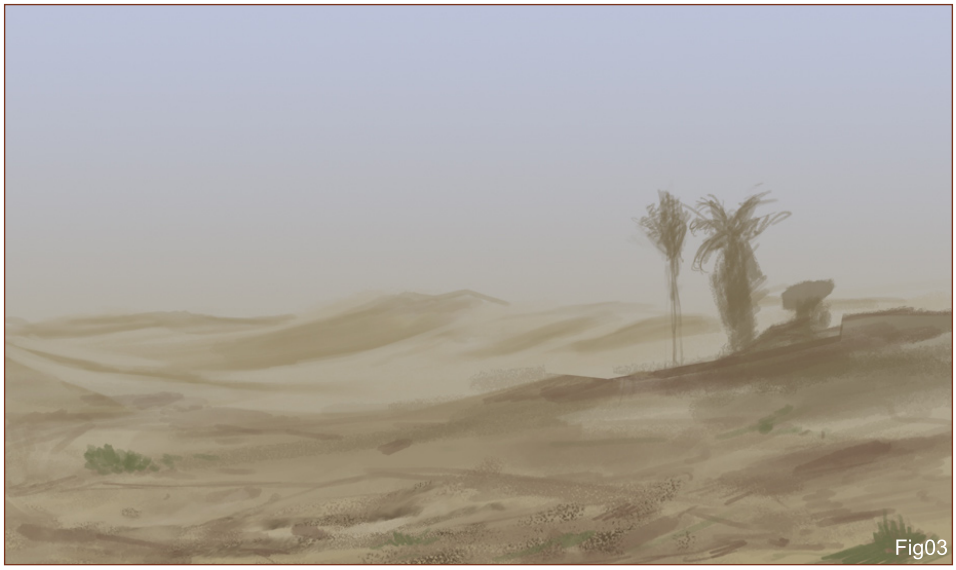
For this month's tutorial I decided not to make the actual subject of the picture the focal point. I liked the idea of making the caravan seem almost incidental, in order to emphasise the size of the desert which I wanted to almost consume them. I wanted to put a figure in the foreground, gazing upon the caravan from afar and whose intentions remain unknown. Perhaps he is there to rescue the slaves, or maybe he is a scout for some war party?! Either way, he will serve to add scale and depth to the scene, as well as help the composition, essentially.

COLOUR BASE

The first stage is to establish the overall colour scheme and main features in the image. I chose to use the Gradient tool (Foreground to Background) as it's very effective at creating a blended land/sky starting point, especially when you are dealing with a dusty or hot scene, such as this (**Fig01**).


Fig01


Fig02


Fig03

The next step was to create the distant sand dunes, which in this case I did on a new layer for the purposes of swift and easy editing later on. In **Fig02** I used a slightly darker tonal version of the sand colour and simply painted in the shaded areas to suggest the dunes.

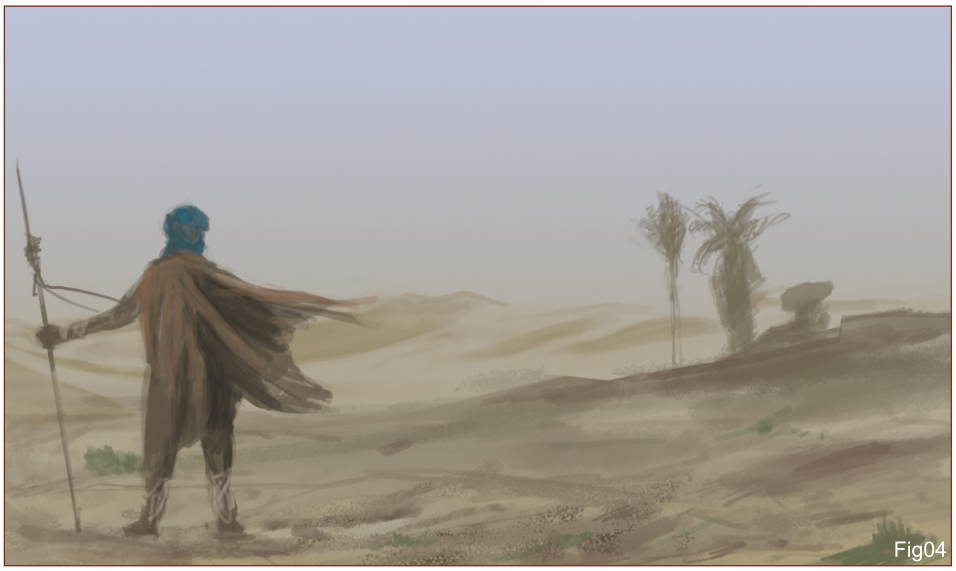
Again, on another layer, I then painted in the

foreground, which can be seen in **Fig03**. I used a couple of textured brushes and the standard Hard Round airbrush to paint some palms and the suggestion of a rock outcrop on the right. You can see that, at the moment, things are very roughly sketched in without any real attention to detail. Having crude marks and mistakes at this stage is not an issue as they can be tidied up very quickly later on if need be.

These three layers make up the most important components in the image and already describe a desert scenario.

FOCAL POINTS

The picture now needs to be "tightened" up and the key elements put in place. The first of which is the foreground character, which I will put in the left to balance the palms and rock. In **Fig04**, you can see the rough shape of the man with a cloak that is being blown by the wind. I wanted to keep him almost as a silhouette, so that he reads more as a shape against what will eventually be a sun-bleached background.


Fig04

With our main character blocked in, it was time to add some detail to the sky. I think you could almost get away with it in the current state, but some subtle clouds will add interest and a little drama. Again, on a new layer, using a paler version of the sky blue, I swiftly blocked in some shapes, remembering not to be too worried about things looking wrong (**Fig05**).

It was then time too add in the subject of this month's challenge: the slave caravan. As I said, I wanted this to almost appear incidental, so I decided to have them trailing from the middle distance off into the background. The other thing that needed addressing was the contrast. At this stage, it looks as if there is a bit of a sandstorm as the tonal range is somewhat limited.


Fig05


Fig06

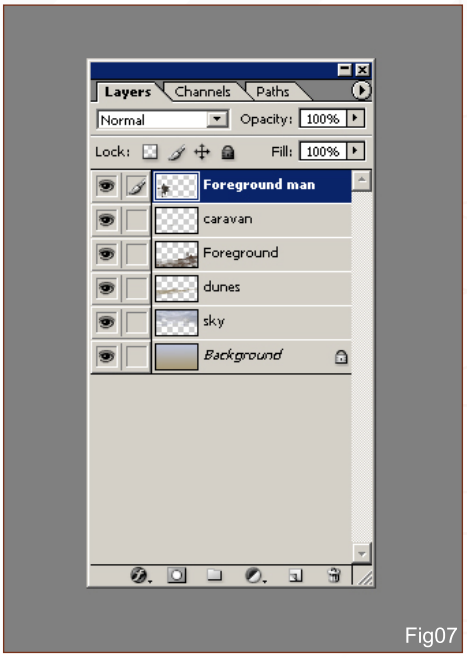


Fig07

In **Fig06** you can see that I have painted in the caravan, as well as darkened the foreground layer and character which helps add depth to the scene. This is where keeping the various elements on separate layers is useful! I painted some of the small slaves stooping as they walk to help portray fatigue or hardship, perhaps against driving wind and sand, and I also linked them with a rope/chain.

COLOUR ADJUSTMENTS

The picture was almost complete at this stage, but a few small changes could make a huge difference overall and tie everything together nicely. In **Fig07,** you can see the layer structure so far which will enable control over all the major parts of the image.

First of all, I added some sunlight to brighten up the whole picture. This was done using a Radial Gradient blending from a pure white to a bright orange. The layer was set to Overlay mode with an opacity of around 35%, which you can see in **Fig08**.

This has essentially injected some heat into the scene and transformed it from a late evening into a mid-afternoon. This layer, when set to Normal mode and at 100%, looks like **Fig09**. This layer was meant to depict the sunlight, but


Fig08

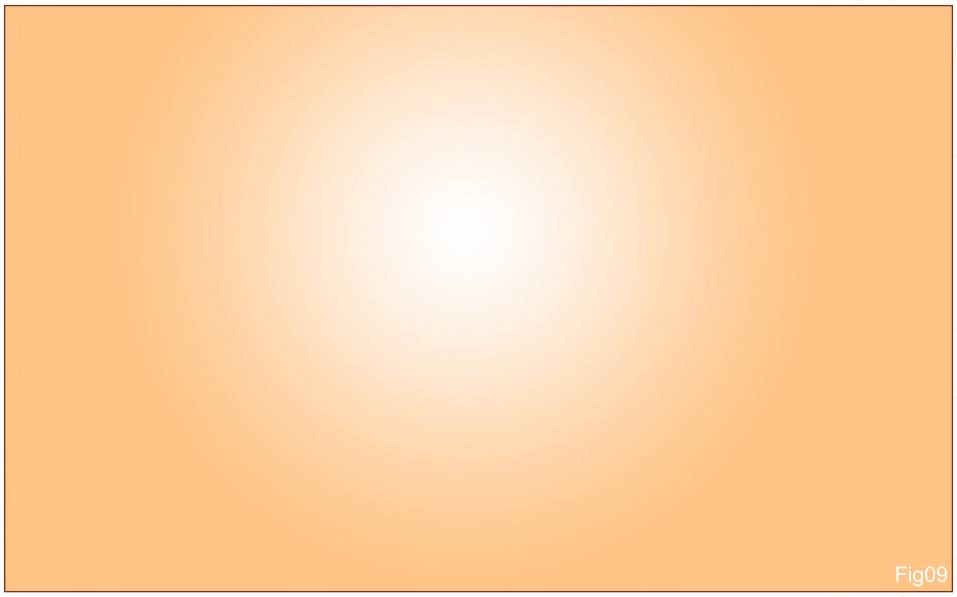

Fig09


Fig10

I also added the actual sun on another layer. This was done in a similar manner, except the gradient was not stretched to the edge of the canvas and was to blend from white to pale yellow, set to Hard Light at 70% opacity (**Fig10**). You can also see that I added some highlights on the foreground rocks and tweaked the main character slightly, as well as giving his spear a metal tip.

This all but concludes the tutorial, but there is one more quick layer to add in the form of another Gradient. It was set to Multiply blending mode and composed of a dark brown to transparent layer from the bottom edge to just above the caravan train. This helped bind the foreground and add a little more atmospheric perspective. The desert is almost swallowing the slaves now!

The final image can be seen on the following page (**Final**).



CONCLUSION

I hope that you have enjoyed this month's speed painting exercise as much as I have. As always, it was a challenge to do, but one that was fun. I have always been keen on deserts and so enjoyed this particular one!

I hope that I have showed how powerful colour adjustments can be and how they can transform an image. When the picture is broken down into key layers it also proves how variations can be achieved almost immediately, which is vital in this day and age when producers and directors require quick changes!

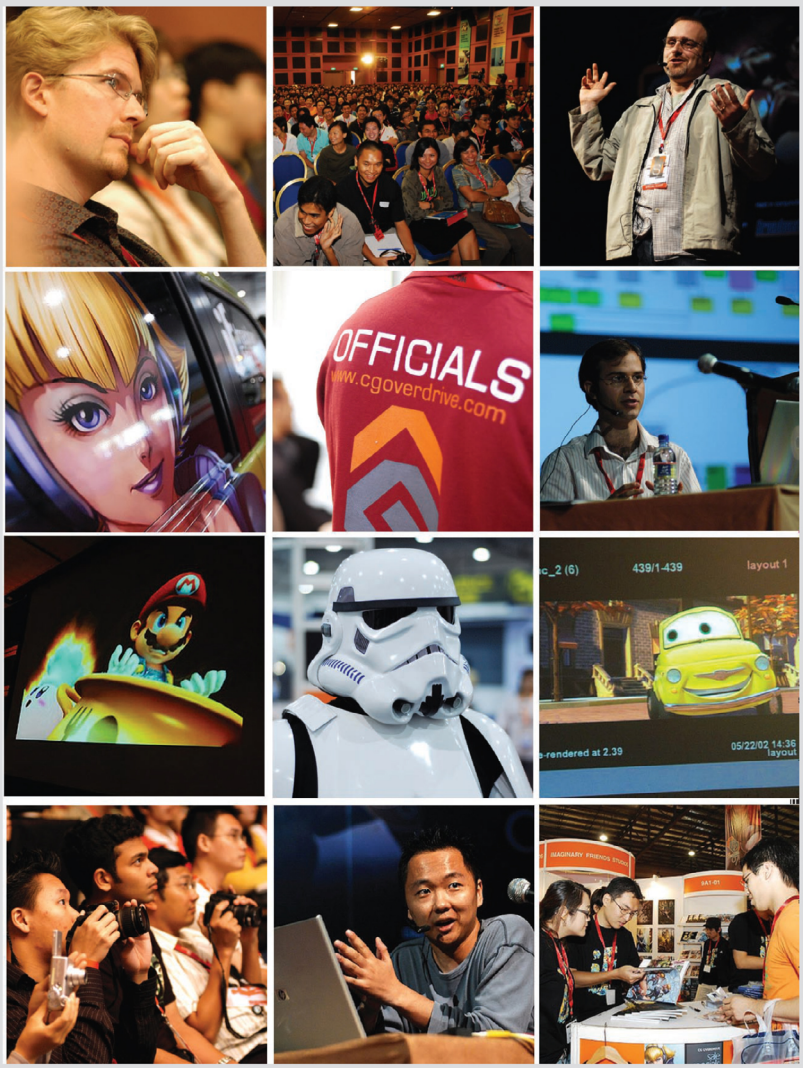
RICHARD TILBURY

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Final



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Tiberius Viris brings to us the first part of this 5-part Matte Painting Tutorial Series. He will cover basic tasks for all of us that would like to get into doing some matte painting, as well as covering some more advanced aspects.

Tiberius kicks off the series by showing us how to convert a day image into a night scene! ...

matte painting
day to night

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

GREETINGS!

My name is Tiberius Viris and during the coming months I'm going to be showing you, over a 5-part series, the basics of Matte Painting, as well as some more advanced techniques.

The tutorials are aimed at beginners, as well as those who already have some experience; however, advanced knowledge of Photoshop is required in both cases. If you are not familiar with adjustment layers, layer masks or channels (RGB), you should read about these topics prior to starting this tutorial.

INTRODUCTION

We will begin the series with a very common transformation: day-to-night. As a Junior Matte Painter, you would be asked to do this task quite often! It's a method that seems easy at the first glance, but in truth is a little more complicated. When darkening an image this much, you must be wary of losing depth. You must still have enough levels to offer us decent details, and even depth. This means compressing all of the daytime rules into a 4-times-smaller-brightness interval. However, there's also upside to this, which is the fact that you can hide imperfections 4-times easier!


Fig01


Fig02

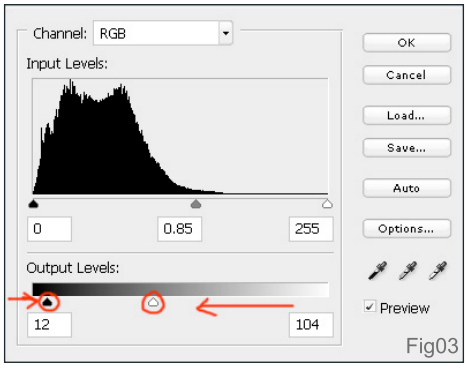


Fig03

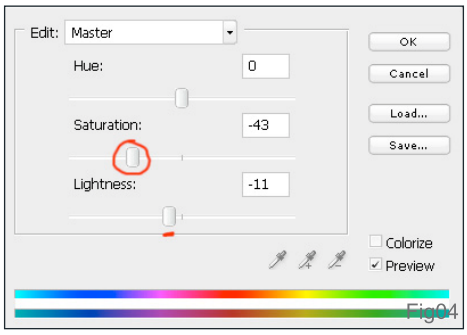


Fig04

Above you can see the before photo and the after result of what we're going to be tackling in this tutorial (**Fig01** and **Fig02**). **Note:** in the final image (**Fig02**), there's no pure black level in the image – not even close! If you want to get technical, there are 13 grey levels in difference between the lowest grey in the image and pure black (out of a 256 levels reference).

WHAT ARE WE AFTER?

I'm going to try to show you a good working habit that can be applied anywhere – not just in matte painting – which will save you a lot of time and nervousness. The key is to think and plan your image! Sure, as artists we often tend to rush ahead under the heat of passion, but as professionals we should first learn how to tame that fire, and to make it last as long as we need it to, especially when we work on big and long term projects.

So, the first step is to think about what you are after. See what you have and, more importantly, what you don't have. See what you need to get for the project (maybe you have to ask your team mates for a 3D render or a


Fig05

cloud formation). When you feel like you have everything you need, plan your creation steps so that you don't work chaotically and lose precious time.

In this case, we are after a day-to-night transition. We have a raw photo (**Fig01**) which shouldn't be altered too much in terms of elements, so this is pretty straight-forward as far as material is concerned. So let's plan out the creation steps. We will have to:

- adjust the colour values and brightness so they match a nighttime scenario
- replace the sky
- create artificial light
- refine the atmosphere
- add details and final touches

BASIC STEPS

In any matte painting, the key is to work with many layers and use adjustment layers for transformation in order to achieve a lot of flexibility. By painting the layer's mask, you can select which areas to affect and you can discard/modify any layer at any time.

To start with, we will have to darken the image and give it a nighttime mood. **Note:** since we lose a lot of information by doing this, we must be careful not to darken it too much so we still retain enough detail! To do this, we must alter the brightness, the colour values and the saturation. This translates into 3 adjustment layers:

- **Levels:** With this layer we will push the brightness of the scene towards a dark grey, this way we prevent any pixel becoming brighter than that value (**Fig03**).

- **Colour Balance:** Here we will adjust the colours toward a more blue-cyan palette, to match an American nighttime scenario. The amount of each altered value depends from scene to scene, so I can't give you a recipe here. Just play with it until it looks nighttime-like. If you need to, you can also add a Curves adjustment to define the mood, but we'll talk about this later on.

- **Hue/Saturation:** Here we will lower the saturation of the image, because at nighttime


Fig06


Fig07

we don't see too much colour. Note that this must be on top of the rest to work properly! (**Fig04**)

After applying some of these basic layers, I achieved the result in **Fig05**. Notice how the sky is much brighter than the rest of the scene! So we have to options: either we darken it more than the rest of the scene, or we replace it.

Let's choose a moon to be somewhere to the right of the sky, and out of the scene, like in the original photo.

Before I go any further, I want to do some refining and define the light direction, because the photo is too uniformly lit for my taste right now. For this:

- I've created a shadow layer (another levels adjustment which further narrows the brightness values) to create a darkening gradient over the sky towards the left and the horizon, and I've also painted in some soft shadows;
- I've then increased the upper limit of the grey values a little, because it felt too dark (this translates into brighter highlights). I've done this in the original levels layer, which is why it's always good to use adjustment layers;
- I've then created an extra curves adjustment layer at this point in order to bring in cyan values over the highlights (by going into the red channel and pulling an anchor point below the main linear function, this will cast a complementary value over the image (cyan is the complement of red, by the way)). I always use Curves and Color Balance to create moods because, from my experience, it creates better results than by using just one of them (**Fig06**).

When this was done I replaced the sky with a more interesting and suitable one. For this photo it was very easy to replace the sky with the help of the Magic Wand, because the sky from the original photo was clear blue and the rest of the picture had no blue values. So all I had to do was to make a selection of the sky, invert it, and then fill it with a black value into the new sky's mask.

Sometimes, you may get a more stubborn sky and then you'll have to put in more effort to select it. From case to case, the most common methods are channel extraction or lasso selection (**note:** the final part of this series will present some extraction methods) (**Fig07**).

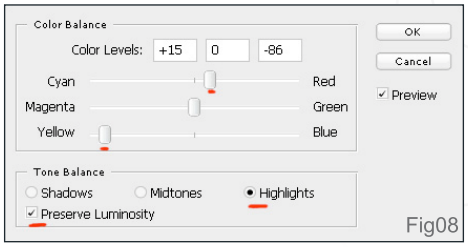


Fig08

I also adjusted the depth as the image was too dark in the distance.

All in all, this covers the basic steps which define the overall mood and colour palette. From now on, the work focuses on details that will bring life and realism to the image!

ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

It might be just an old castle, but at night residents and visitors must be able to see inside it, right? Except in those cases when the Director specifically wants no light from within,



Fig09

the next step in a day-to-night process is to add artificial light. This is a somewhat tricky step because you have to plan those lights. Firstly, you have to place them in places where one would expect to see them, such as on wall sections, in halls, door entrances, windows and so on. Secondly, you have to be careful not to ruin the composition! Sure, a torch on a wall is realistic enough, but what if that wall is also hit by moonlight? So we need a compromise between artistic and real.

The light we use for this task is usually yellow-orange, and is the complementary colour of the overall blue-cyan mood, which pleases the eye. There are several techniques to create this type of light, but I'll present the fastest and simplest. Duplicate the original layer (the raw photo), then move in on top of everything. Apply a fiery colour balance transformation to it (**Fig08**) then apply a negative mask so that it's invisible. With a soft round brush, start to paint in the part you want to be seen (the pool of lights).



Fig10

This is what I've started to do and here's the result after adding a light to a behind wall section (**Fig09**).

Now, this massive and old castle has a lot of windows, but, if lit, most of them would just ruin that old, ancient feel. The towers are already being lit by moonlight, so they are not an option, and the wall section already defines the centre. It's a tough choice! So let's light a window in the left top tower which will contrast with the dark sky and show the thick, foggy atmosphere, and we'll also add another smaller one to the lower left in order to lead the eye. Story-wise, the top-lit window can imply that maybe there's a leader or a wizard reading old books at night! (**Fig10**)

Good, well I think this does it for now with artificial light. You can go further and try to bring more light in, but I'll stop here and let you experiment for yourselves. Be careful though, since we have such a bright moon you should not overdo it or you'll ruin the whole mood!

DO YOU FEEL CREATIVE?

At this moment, some may call the image done and go for final adjustments, but how about a little creativity? This is the step where you bring that little extra spice – the details that complete the image!

For this piece, I'm simply going to paint some low mist over that moat/river which is being lit slightly by the moon light. It also adds to the general mood and explains why the atmosphere is so thick.

Then, to finish it off, I'm going to paint in some haze, especially over distant parts of the castle (to do this we just make a new layer, colour pick the value and lightly paint over those areas. This adds to the mood and helps to sell the image. The final result can be seen here (**Fig11**).

I hope this has been of some help to you! See you in the next part!

TIBERIUS VIRIS

For more from this artist visit
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Fig11


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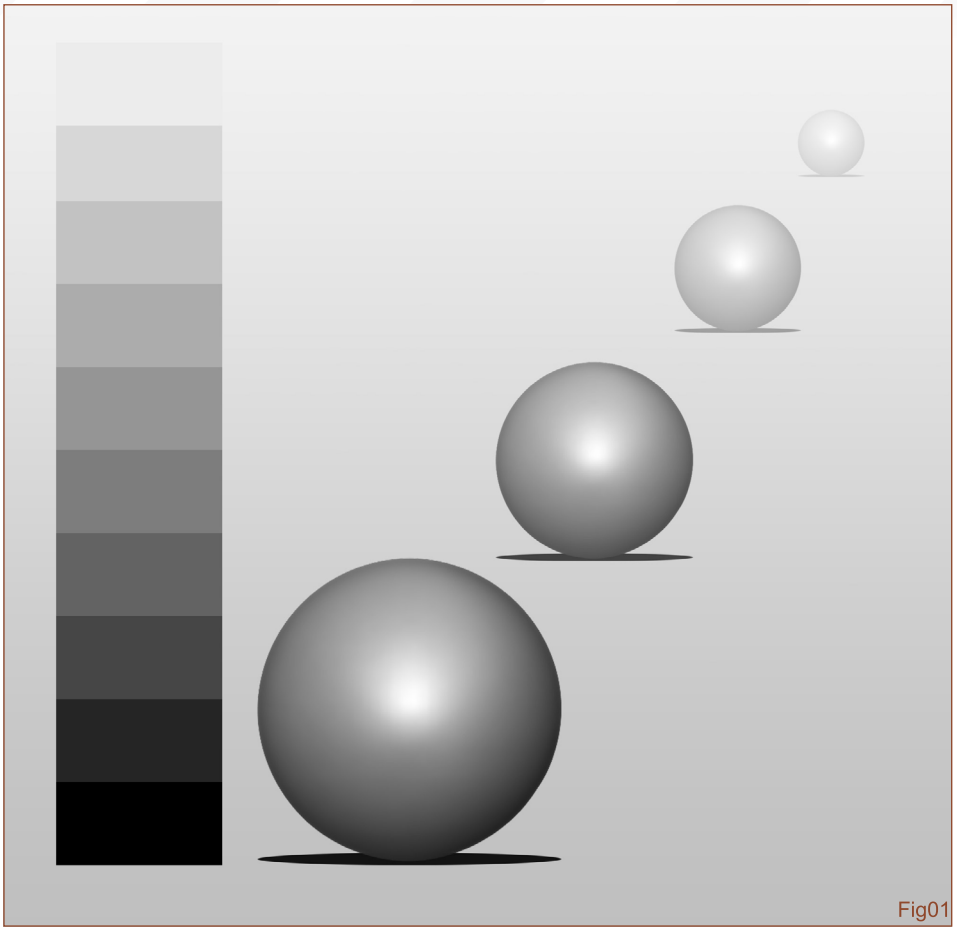


"SPACE IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENT THAT IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO HOW A VIEWER PERCEIVES DEPTH."

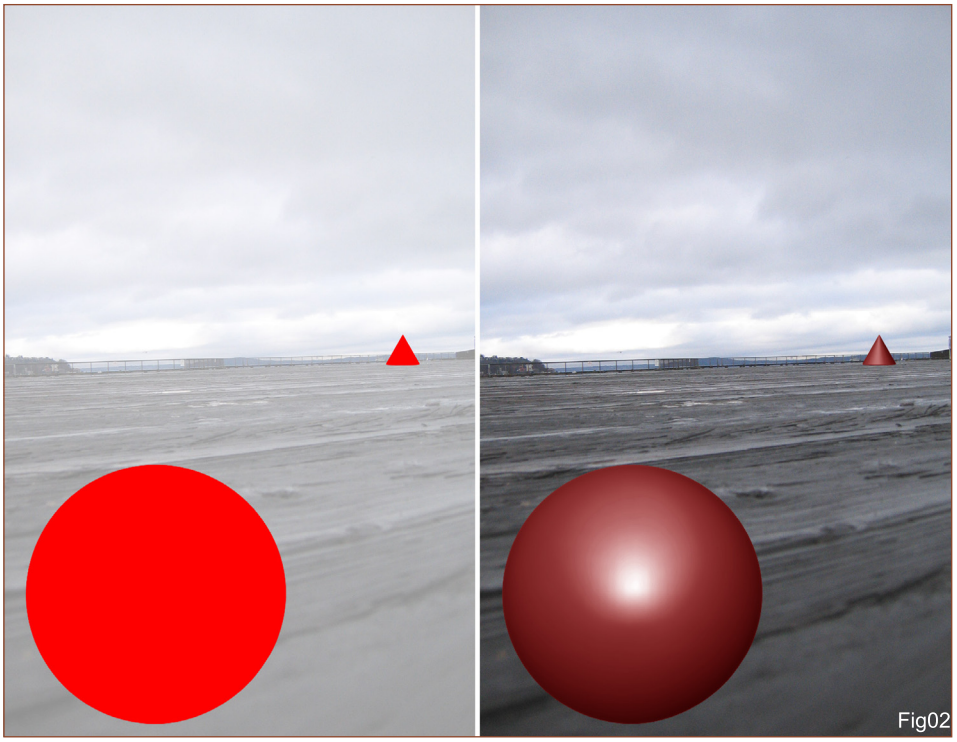
Figurative Drawing & Foundation Studies Series Part 3

INTRODUCTION

In last month's article, we took a look at what could be considered the most complex of all the seven elements of art: colour. In this third and final installment, I'll be explaining the remaining elements of value, space and texture. I'll also be creating a figure study that incorporates all of these elements using a mixture of traditional and digital mediums.

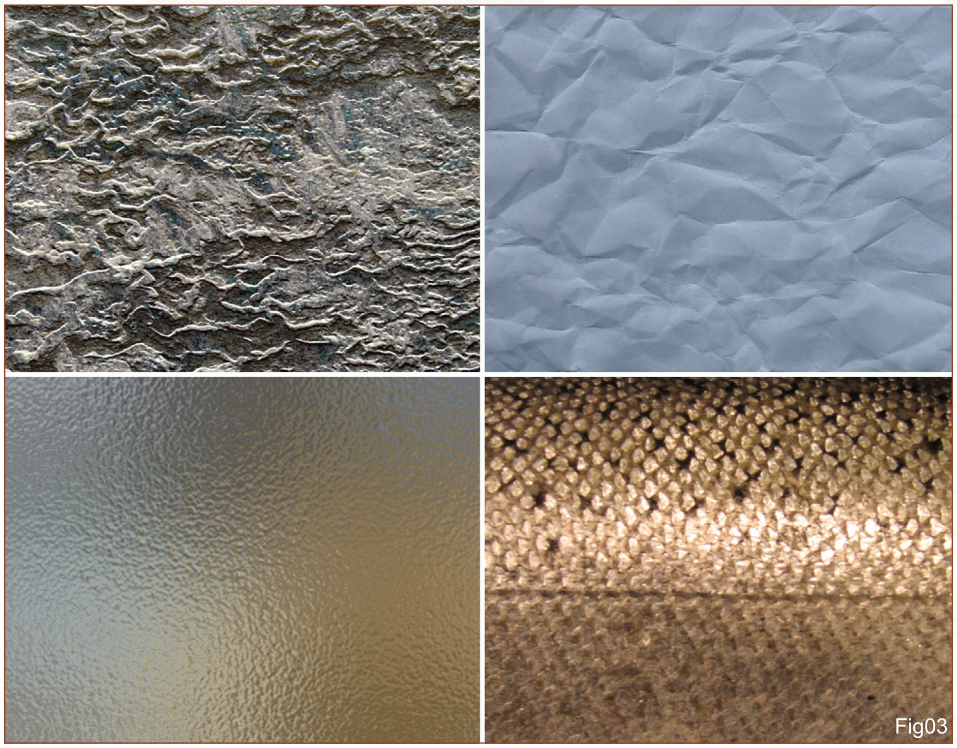

Fig01

As I stated in the previous article, the relative quantity of visible light within an environment is known as luminosity. Similarly, the element of value is the lightness or darkness of a surface. When we refer to value in the context of art, it can be used to explain the degree of lightness or darkness in a colour, as well as the relationship of light and shade within an image. When we see an object in our environment, we are seeing a culmination of all the visual elements of art in one form or another. But in order to re-create this object on a 2D surface, we must be able to render these elements accurately. Value plays a very important role as it allows the viewer to distinguish the size, shape and depth of an object as well as how we perceive brightness or darkness (**Fig01**). Understanding how light interacts with the surface of a form by using gradations of tonal value is crucial in your ability to render objects and light that are recognizable on a 2D plane.


Fig02

Space is another important element that is directly related to how a viewer perceives depth. It can be used to direct attention to certain elements in a composition and can also create balance (or imbalance) within an image. Just like shape, space is broken down into both positive and negative components. When space is referred to in a positive aspect, it explains the main area of focus within an image. Anything outside of this is referred to as negative space. If you think of space in terms of perspective, it better illustrates the idea of how it can be used to create dimension. Large components in an image create the illusion that something is closer to you while smaller components create the illusion that they are further away within the space they occupy (**Fig02**).

Our final element is texture, which refers to the surface quality of an image (**Fig03**). It can be expressed in both a physical or visual sense and can be implied in a way where it is rendered with realism or abstractly. Outside of the 2D realm, texture can be a physical experience such as in sculpture or collage. Because everything around us contains its own texture, an artist looking to re-create what's in front of them must understand how surfaces interact with light to create the texture we see. Doing so, allows the artist to illustrate how a surface looks and feels such as it would in real life.


Fig03

So now that we've concluded the explanation for all seven elements of art, I will demonstrate how you can apply them by creating a figure study that incorporates each one. I will be working from a reference photo (**Fig04**), made available with permission by Hong Ly of www.characterdesigns.com. To render the image, I'll be using coloured pencil on textured 9x12 neutrally coloured pastel paper which I'll later bring in to Photoshop for additional editing. Let's begin!



Fig04

Because I am working from a reference image, I purposely choose a reference where miscellaneous objects are omitted from the background so that the central focus of the image is only the figure and nothing more. This allows me to better view the figure's musculature as it sits in space without distraction.

I begin by creating a loose gesture rough to gauge the figure's overall size and proportions (**Fig05**). As I do this, I'm looking for a balance between the height and width of the figure as it relates to the dimensions of the area on the paper I'm working with. When I'm happy with the rough, I lightly fill in the negative space outside the gesture with dark colour, carefully evaluating the spacing between the figure and the background. As I stated in the first part of the series, care must be taken when establishing


Fig05


Fig06


Fig07

shapes. Each shape must be created with accuracy because they in turn affect, and are affected by, the shapes they surround. If you establish a shape hastily, errors in proportion and alignment will occur.

With my gesture rough established, I begin working on the shadow shapes inside the figure (**Fig06**). Again, I carefully establish each one while paying close attention to their size and placement. With my shadow shapes established, I begin laying down highlights (**Fig07**). The highlights themselves are also considered shapes which means once again, I must carefully create each one as I did with the shadow shapes.

From here, I continue to establish the form of the figure by defining the positive and negative

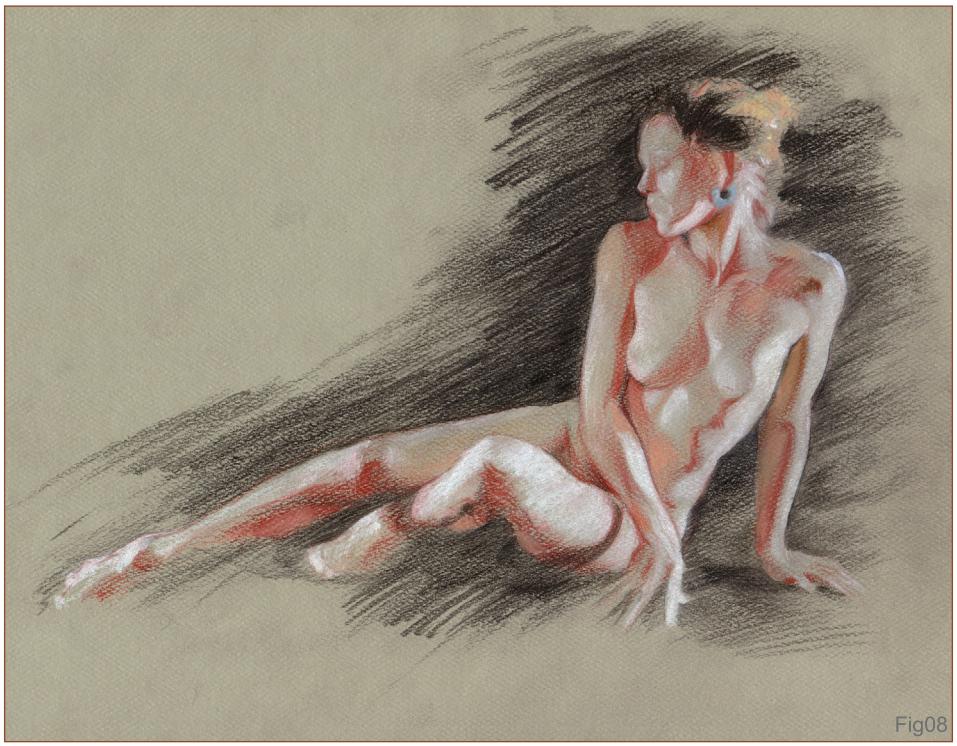

Fig08


Fig09


Fig10

shapes through tonal value (**Fig08**). I create hard edges along these shadow shapes through the use of tone instead of direct lines inside the figure. While it may seem that lines have been drawn, if you look closely, they are actually edges where shadow and light meet (**Fig09**).

At this point, I take a step back and review the work that I've done. Already I notice that alignment and proportional issues have occurred. Most of these issues can be fixed, however, a little surgery will need to take place. I use small amounts of white acrylic which I lay down using a brush to push and adjust the highlight shapes, while continuing to use the coloured pencils to adjust my shadow shapes until their size and alignment are correct. (**Fig10**).



Fig11

Satisfied with my corrections, I tighten up the image by darkening the negative space surrounding the figure as well as the shadows and mid tones. Miscellaneous details are added until I feel the image is complete (**Fig11**). I now scan the image into Photoshop at 300dpi and begin adjusting the colour balance until I am happy with the results. Additional brush strokes are added in Photoshop using a complimentary colour as a final detail (**Fig12**).


Fig12

Remember, all art is made up of these seven elements, though not all of these elements need to be used in order to create a unique work of art. A good artist understands when and how individual elements should be used in order to achieve a desired effect, and becoming proficient in their application will undoubtedly make you a more versatile artist.

I hope this Figurative Drawing & Foundational Studies Series has been helpful, or at the very least informative. If you have any questions or comments regarding the content of this series, please feel free to contact me anytime. I'm always available for comment, so please do not hesitate!

A huge thanks goes out to Lynette Clee, Chris Perrins, and Hong Ly for their help and support in putting this series together.

JOEL CARLO

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Or contact:
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Joellarlo
2008



Eric Wilkerson brings us the Making Of his image, 'Human Touch'...

human touch

CREATED IN:

Photoshop CS2

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to my digital illustration demonstration. There are many ways of creating a digital painting. This is just my way. I've been trying my best to mimic my traditional oil painting with digital media and have found Photoshop CS2 ideal for this purpose . I tend to stay away from various filters and plug-ins while I work. I have a big library of custom brushes that I hardly ever use. Most of this painting was done with the same 4 brushes used at varying sizes and texture levels. These 4 brushes mimic the flats and filbert brushes I normally use in oils. Throughout this illustration I used very few

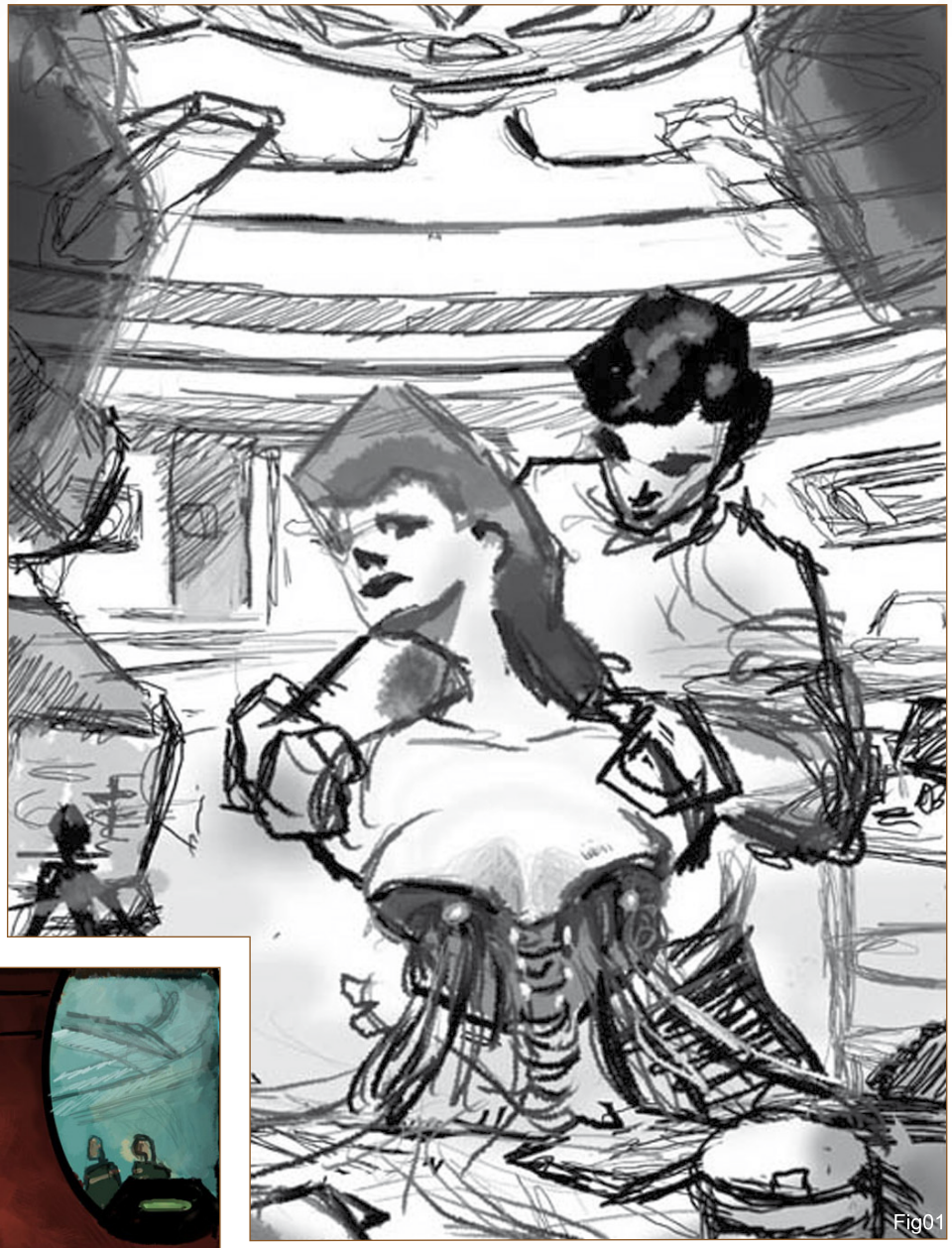
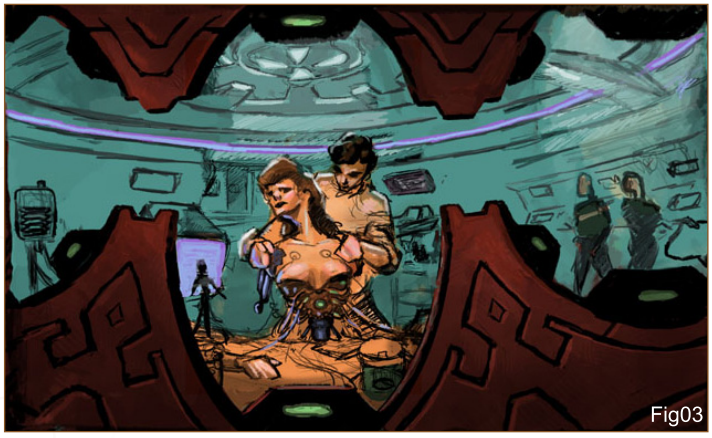

Fig01


Fig02


Fig03

layers: one for the background, one for the foreground, separate layers for both figures, plus a few adjustment layers, and that's about it. I don't have a super fast computer so having few layers keeps my file size down and allows me to slush pixels around without any 'slow-downs'.

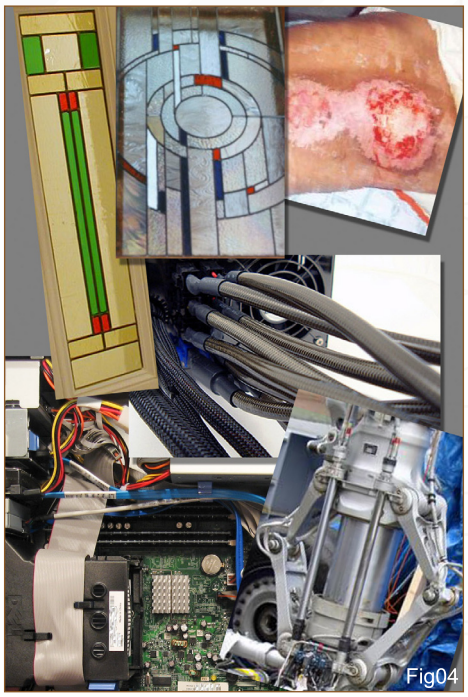
Human Touch began as a sketch I did for an old CGTalk competition a few years ago. Due to work I was unable to move beyond the sketch stage until recently. I always wanted to go back and finish it when I had the time. Even though the title of the competition screamed for it, I'm not really into the whole dark post apocalyptic theme. Instead I decided to paint a simple narrative of a husband and the lengths at which he would go to save his dying wife. I wanted to create a poignant scene that depicted the moment when the pressure sensors in the remains of the woman's upper torso became active so that she could once again experience human touch. The challenge in this painting was in trying to

design believable robotic parts implanted into her chest cavity. I wanted to create a brightly lit medical laboratory that looked convincing enough without taking away from the focal point of the illustration.

CONCEPT SKETCHES

Each Illustration starts from creating thumbnail sketches. For this painting I wanted to play with another laboratory environment, only this time I wanted to convey the idea that the viewer is outside looking in through a space station lab window (**Fig01** and **Fig02**). I played with art nouveau inspired designs for the outer hull of the space station. Background figures and additional lab equipment were indicated through the porthole style windows. Since the focus of the illustration was the interaction between the two main characters, I decided that all this extra environmental detail was unnecessary and had to go (**Fig03**).

While creating rough drawings I am always thinking about mood, lighting, atmosphere, size relationships, composition and the overall concept. After producing some loose thumbnail sketches I then create a rough final drawing as a guide for my next few steps. For me, this stage is the most fun, as here I begin focusing on character and costume designs, architectural detail and other background elements. Depending on the illustration, machinery and other conceptual designs are all worked on as well at this stage.


Fig04

GATHERING REFERENCES

With a fairly good idea of what the composition and overall concept would be, I set out to find reference materials for the figure and environment. I spent time looking at art deco style stained glass as reference for various computer panels. Photos of hydraulic lifts and computer wires were also collected. A photo shoot of professional models was done for the figure references. I also looked up photos of radiation burn victims and amputees. I knew going into this that there needed to be a distinct difference in skin colour between the man and woman. She needed to appear sickly and pale, with burns and scarring on her upper torso (**Fig04**).


Fig05

FINAL DRAWING

When I'd finished gathering my references, all that was left was to complete a detailed final drawing from which to paint. My line drawing was done completely in Photoshop. Some illustrators prefer to draw on paper and scan in their final drawing, but I'm most comfortable working every stage digitally. I took my rough sketch and scaled it up to 15x20" at 300 dpi, which was the size I wanted to paint the final illustration at. A second layer was created

and filled with white, and then the opacity was dropped to around 75%. This acted as a translucent veil that allowed me to still make out the rough sketch and use it as a guide for the figure placement and background details. I added a third layer and began my drawing (**Fig05**).


Fig06

COLOUR STUDIES

Before starting the final painting it was necessary for me to settle on a colour scheme for the illustration. My colour studies are all done at a much reduced scale from the final painting size, although I sometimes set out to create an analogous colour scheme. I ultimately stayed in my comfort zone and stuck with complementary tones. Since a complementary scheme has the most colour contrast, I thought it might work best, especially around the woman's body. The ceiling light was the one dominant colour that affected everything else in the painting. Complementary tones were then used for colour accents and to highlight important elements (**Fig06**).

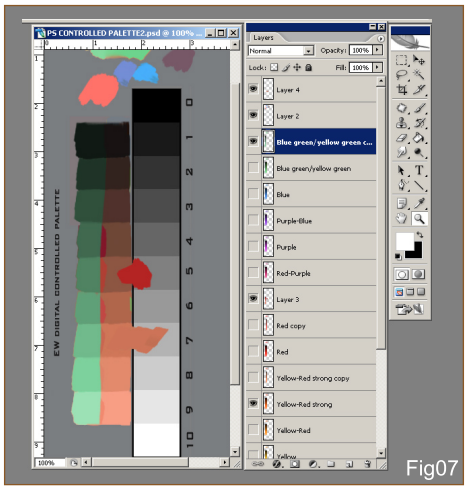

Fig07


Fig08

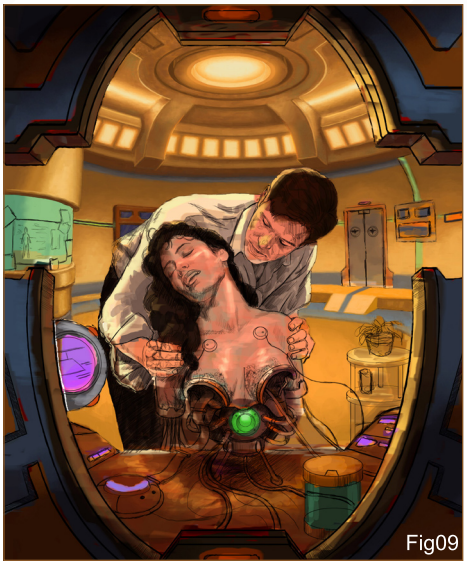
While working out the colour, I created an adjustment layer and dropped the saturation to 0%. This allowed me to see my study in greyscale so I could check my values. I needed to be sure there was enough light/dark contrast in the painting. I kept in mind that, in interior lighting scenarios with multiple artificial lights, as objects go back in space, they lose contrast and become lighter than foreground values.

FINAL PAINTING

Now for the main event. When working in oils I follow the Frank Reilly system of painting. This method taught me to paint with a controlled palette. Almost all my essential colours are pre-mixed into value strings from light to dark. When I decided to work digitally I saw no reason to change that approach. I have a PSD file that has a value bar for the entire colour wheel and a greyscale bar next to it. I'm then able to adjust the chroma of a hue simply by picking the foreground colour and its grey equivalent. With Photoshop's colour dynamics turned on and switched to pen pressure, I can control the intensity of colour by how hard or soft I press down on the tablet (**Fig07**).

Once I've settled on a colour scheme I create a new file with my flattened line drawing as the base layer. I take my colour study layer and scale it up to my final working dimensions, then lay it over the base layer. This eliminates the white canvas and serves as my first wash of colour. This is a step I would traditionally do in acrylics (**Fig08**).

I created a new layer above the colour wash and began working on the background. I always work from background to foreground while constantly checking my values and light/dark contrast (**Fig09** and **Fig10**).


Fig09

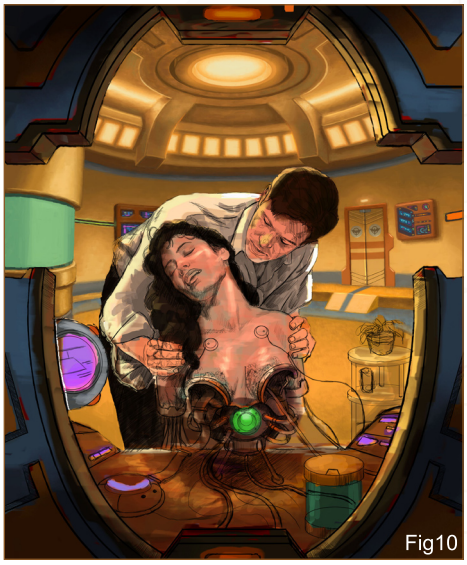
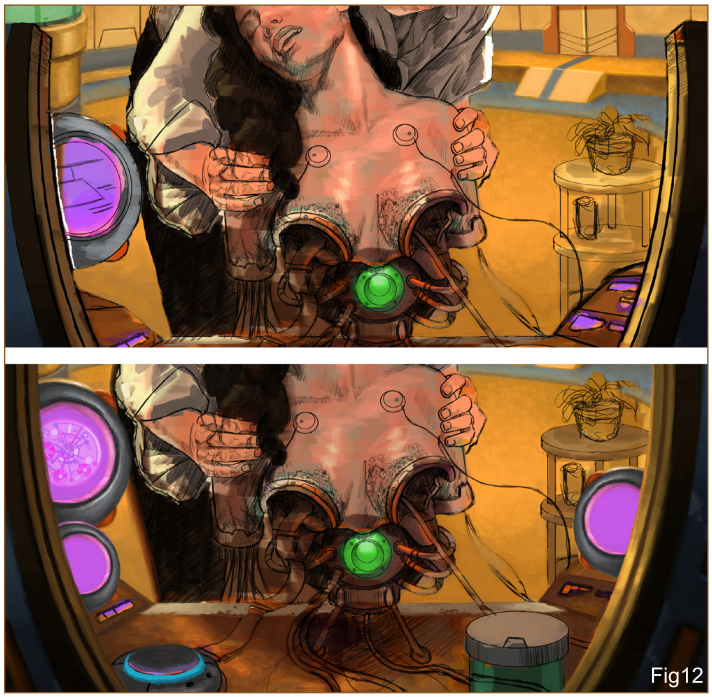

Fig10


Fig11


Fig12

Once I have established colour and my values for a painting, and when I have a general idea where the piece is going, I tend to just move across/up or down through a painting, until complete. As I work from background to foreground, I start to see the painting in quarter sections that need to be completed as I go. I like to see my under drawing 'road map' as I paint.

As you can see from **Fig11**, I'm just about finished with the background at this stage and have moved on to the foreground window arches and added my art deco influenced design to the background view screen. When designing the lab environment, I knew I wanted to try painting a scene where the main characters and foreground details were rim lit by

a bright light source shining from inside the picture. This was an idea inspired by Orientalist painters. Only, in this painting, I didn't want the figure details to get lost in silhouette. I established that there would be a diffuse main light coming in from the window which helps to softly illuminate the figures facing away from the back lighting.

With the painting of the background and window frame finished, I could then move back inside to paint the foreground. The foreground lab table seemed unbalanced with only one glowing monitor to the left. I also wanted to hide the hard angles that made up the edges of the table, so I added two more monitors to the corners of the table for the eye to comfortably roll off (**Fig12**).

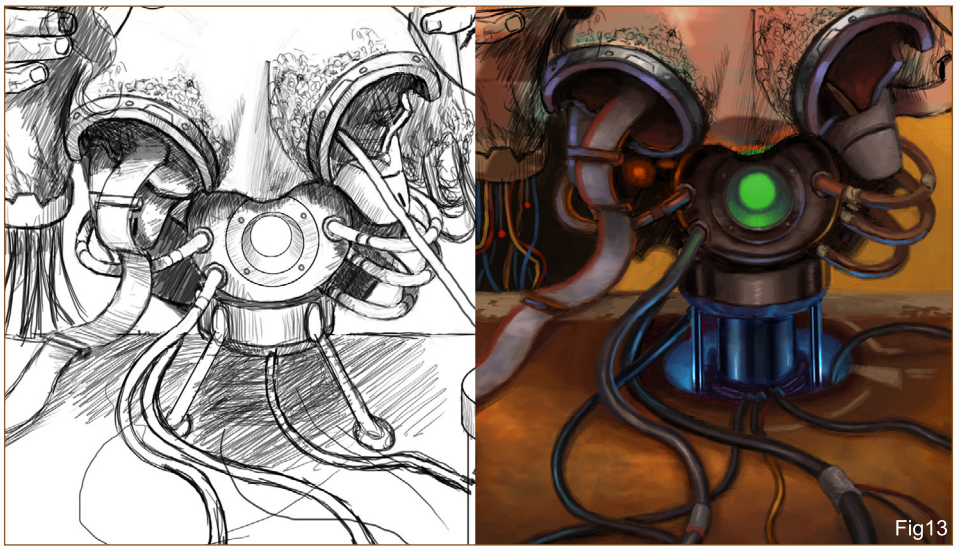
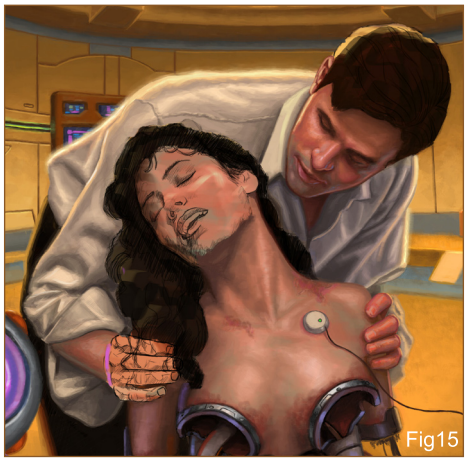

Fig13


Fig14


Fig15

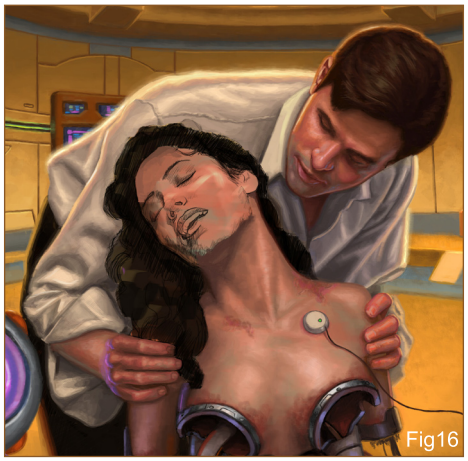

Fig16



Fig17

When it came time to paint the figures, I started working on the robotic parts of the woman first. I wasn't satisfied with my initial design for the support legs holding her torso in place. I looked back at my references of hydraulics and completely changed the support lift design to something that looked like it could raise and lower her body to various heights. I always enjoy painting in glowing light sources, so painting in all the tubes and blue reflected lights was the most fun part of the illustration for me! (**Fig13**)

With the woman's torso and machinery worked out, I moved on to the man and woman's bodies. When I first started painting digitally I got caught up in that "paint every pore" treatment. I don't have the patience for that anymore; I prefer to keep everything pretty loose and painterly when seen at 100% image size. When it comes time to paint the figure, I usually have the works of my mentor Garin Baker and contemporary artist Scott Burdick on the screen for inspiration. I always paint the figure

last, working and adjusting the figures' skin tone to fit the environment – never the other way around. I paint thinly both in oils and digitally. I'll also often leave some of the original drawing to show through – not as a design choice but simply to save time. It isn't necessary for me to render out every little detail. Working with my paintbrush set with Colour Dynamics checked and at between 50-70% opacity, I began building up the man's shirt and face. Painting with a low opacity gives the impression of working from thin to thick. Each brushstroke builds up the colour and helps me to shape and mould the form while still allowing me to see my under drawing (**Fig14, Fig15** and **Fig16**).

FINISHING TOUCHES

The very last thing I worked on in this painting was the woman's face, and small tweaks were made to her body to give her skin that pale sickly look I intended. Body scars and burn marks were added in around her face, neck and what is left of her breasts. Since the woman was painted on a layer separate from the man, I was able to create an adjustment layer to add in cool blues and greens to her body only. Darker purples and green tones were added in and around her eyes, as well as a few wisps of hair over her forehead. Voila, finito! (**Fig17**)

This illustration took about a total of 50 hours to complete, from start to finish. This is my normal workflow. My stages of development (concept sketch, colour sketch, reference gathering, final drawing and painting) are unchanged from my traditional approach. I hope this gives you an idea of how to approach a painting.

ERIC WILKERSON

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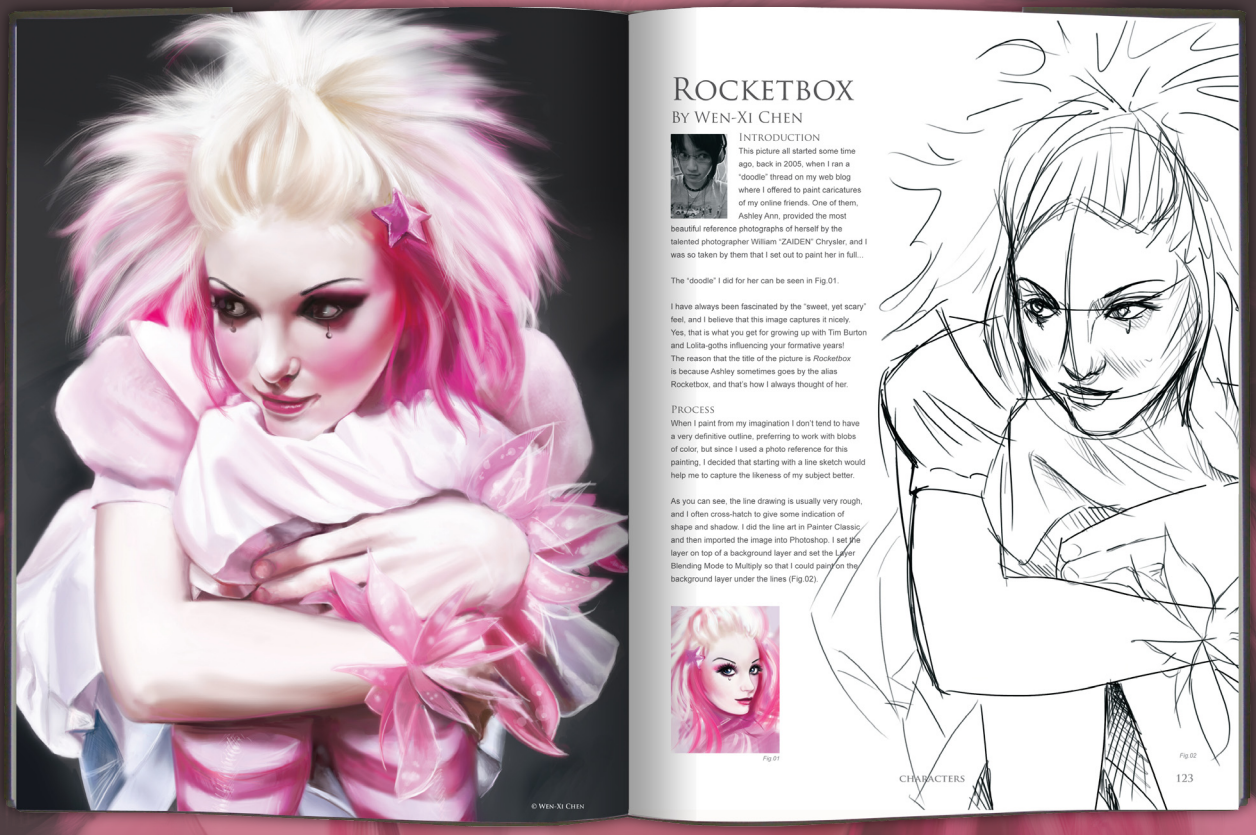
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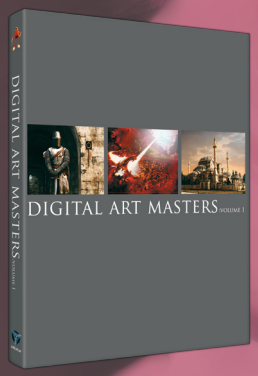
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